

Children's Hospital

ON SNORING

Let's find out
more!

SNORING IN CHILDREN MAKES A LOUD STATEMENT

When you have a child that snores, the whole family can be affected. It's hard to believe that your angelic little one can produce such raucous, nerve-shattering noises, but it happens in many homes and can cause health concerns for the child.

Chances are, there may be a relatively simple solution to your household distress.

When to see the doctor

When evaluating if snoring in your child is a problem that needs to be attended to by a physician, consider if the snoring is occasional or habitual. If it is habitual, that is occurring four or more nights a week, ask yourself the following questions:

- Has the snoring persisted for at least three months?
- Is my child restless, gasping for air or waking up sporadically?
- Is it affecting my child's daytime activities with:
 - attention difficulties
 - concentration problems
 - hyperactivity
 - difficulty in waking up
 - naps interspersed throughout the day

If you answered "yes" to these questions, then it's time to talk to your pediatrician or primary care physician.

How many kids snore?

According to [Ron Mitchell, M.D.](#), Professor of Otolaryngology & Pediatrics at UT Southwestern Medical Center and Division Director of Pediatric Otolaryngology at Children's HealthSM, snoring in children is uncommon before the age of two. Babies may snore off and

on, but it is usually due to congestion such as from a passing cold. Snoring is most common in children ages 4-6 because that is the time when the tonsils and adenoids grow larger and can lead to a blockage in the back of the throat. Between 4-6 years snoring can affect 25% of children whereas, after age 6, snoring becomes less prevalent, affecting only a small percentage of children.

What's the big deal about a little noise?

Children who snore don't sleep well and are prone to a number of side effects, including hyperactive behavior and concentration problems, which can adversely affect their daytime activities including their performances in school. In addition, children who don't sleep well have more health problems and have to visit the doctor more often. "We are continuing to study the additional health issues directly related to snoring in children," said Dr. Mitchell.

What causes snoring?

By far, the most common cause of snoring is enlargement of tonsils and adenoids. According to Dr. Mitchell, 90% of snoring children have large tonsils and adenoids. "We are also seeing an increase in children who are overweight and obese, and weight gain can also lead to snoring problems," said Dr. Mitchell. Allergies can also be the culprit. Another cause is craniofacial disorders that can be seen in children with cleft palates and Down syndrome. Finally, some children with neuromuscular diseases, such as muscular dystrophy, may be prone to snoring.

What's the treatment?

The first recommendation that Dr. Mitchell makes to address snoring is to establish a good sleep routine. Children need to go to bed at the same time each night in a room that is dark and quiet, conducive to sleep. It is helpful if parents do not sleep in the same bed or room as the child.

The second thing to consider is allergies. "Sometimes a nasal spray or an antihistamine helps alleviate the snoring issue," said Dr. Mitchell. Parents may want to remove all allergen possibilities from the child's sleeping area including pets, older pillows and stuffed animals.

The third thing to consider is the surgical removal of the tonsils and adenoids. "This is a common procedure and has a great success rate with 80% of patients normalizing with minimal or no snoring and very little sleep problems afterwards," said Dr. Mitchell. Children's HealthSM Children's Medical Centers are fully equipped with the technology and the trained staff to make this procedure as minimally invasive as possible.

Regardless of the treatment, your physician can help with your child's snoring , and you can look forward to more peaceful nights ahead. "A good night's sleep is not only the best thing for the child but it also benefits the whole family," said Dr. Mitchell.

