



# SLEEP, SNORING, AND HEADACHES

*What is the connection?*

Snoring and headaches are very significant symptoms of sleep disorders. A sleep breathing problem is caused by any disruption of the airflow in the airway during sleep (such as snoring) which results in an immediate stress reaction (fight-or-flight response). People are not usually aware of most of these awakenings during sleep, but these stress hormones from the adrenal glands, such as cortisol, adrenaline, and norepinephrine, have multiple severe consequences or stress responses to sleeping bodies.

Clinching or grinding of the teeth, one of the immediate responses, causes extra stress to the jaw joints (TMJ), resulting in jaw joint pain, headaches, and migraines. The other most important damage to the body

from stress hormones is excessive inflammation throughout the body. Excessive chronic inflammation can cause joint pain, fibromyalgia, back pain, headaches, damage to the immune system, high cholesterol, weight gain, high blood pressure, heart problems, and cognitive problems.

Most people do not realize they do not have to have sleep apnea to have a serious sleep disorder with very severe health consequences. Upper Airway Resistance Syndrome (UARS), a sleep disorder with no sleep apnea, is very common and results in TMJ problems, headaches and migraines, ear fullness or ringing, dizziness and vertigo, joint pains, depression and anxiety, acid reflux or indigestion, brain fog, insomnia, as well as multiple symptoms from excessive

inflammation due to stress hormones.

Treatment of patients without sleep apnea involves the wearing of an oral appliance during sleep which works by gently holding the lower jaw forward, preventing the tongue from falling back into the airway. ENT evaluations can also be important to evaluate tonsils, adenoids, and the nasal airway for any possible obstructions. Severe sleep apnea problems are treated by sleep physicians using a CPAP (forced air) device.

Sleep disorders are very insidious problems which can drastically damage one's health, and many people are treated for the symptoms of the disorder rather than getting to the real cause. Good quality sleep is just as important for your health—if not more so—than diet and exercise. 🍷

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