

Snoring and Somnoplasty

What causes Snoring?

Snoring occurs when floppy tissue in the airway relaxes during sleep and vibrates. Most snoring is caused by an enlarged soft palate and uvula at the back of the mouth, though the tongue, tonsils, adenoids and congested nasal passages can also contribute to the sound. The level of snoring can be aggravated by excess weight, alcohol intake, and smoking.

Is Snoring Dangerous to my Health?

Snoring may be a sign of obstructive sleep apnea, a serious disorder in which the snorer stops breathing several times an hour during sleep. Dr. Rheuark will perform a full examination to determine whether you are a "simple snorer" or if you have a more significant breathing disorder. Either condition may be easily treated; simple snoring treated with the Somnoplasty and obstructive sleep apnea treated with a variety of other surgical approaches.

How will my Physician investigate my Snoring?

If you are considering treatment for your snoring, it is essential to rule out obstructive sleep apnea. A careful examination of your medical history and physical examination with flexible nasopharyngoscopy may be done by Dr. Rheuark. An overnight sleep test is the accepted method of evaluating your snoring and breathing patterns. Dr. Rheuark will then discuss the diagnostic alternatives available and recommend the best treatment for you.

What is Somnoplasty?

Somnoplasty uses low power, low temperature radiofrequency energy to treat a well-defined area in the uvula or soft palate to help resolve your snoring. The procedure takes place in Dr. Rheuark's office under local anesthesia, and typically takes less than thirty minutes. Radiofrequency energy is delivered beneath the surface layer of the soft palate, called the mucosa. The treated tissue is heated just enough to create an area of coagulation. Over the next four to six weeks the treated tissue is naturally removed by the body, reducing the volume and stiffening the area responsible for your snoring. There may be some swelling and discomfort for a few days following the procedure, not unlike the feeling of an oncoming cold. During the next month or so you should experience a gradual decrease in your snoring. Depending on your level of snoring, the Somnoplasty procedure may need to be repeated. Since the delicate lining of the palate is protected, the Somnoplasty procedure is virtually painless and allows for a quick recovery.

Am I a candidate for Somnoplasty?

If you snore loudly and frequently and do not have other breathing disorders, the Somnoplasty procedure may be the solution for you. Dr. Rheuark will be able to evaluate your situation and determine whether you are a candidate for the Somnoplasty procedure.

How else can my snoring be treated?

Non-surgical approaches include weight loss and other lifestyle modifications or the use of an oral appliance to reposition the jaw during sleep. A variety of traditional surgeries are available to reduce the excess tissue. However, the Somnoplasty procedure gently reduces and stiffens the tissues in the soft palate and uvula, and does so without the pain associated with conventional surgeries.

Make an appointment with Dr. Rheuark at (310) 373-8777.