

## SNORING-STOPPING DEVICES ANY GOOD?

More than 90 million Americans snore, according to the National Sleep Foundation, most of them, men. And believe it or not, there are more than 300 patents out there for products that promise to end snoring, from sprays to strips to special pillows. But do any of them work? Frances Largeman-Roth, a senior editor of Health magazine ([www.health.com](http://www.health.com)) and the author of "Feed the Belly: The Pregnant Mom's Healthy Eating Guide," looked at the ones that work, and the ones that don't, on The Early Show Saturday Edition on May 30, 2009.

### **WE SHOULD PROBABLY START BY POINTING OUT THAT SNORING CAN ACTUALLY BE A SIGN OF A SERIOUS HEALTH CONDITION.**

Before you start thinking quick-fix, you want to make sure it's nothing more serious. Snoring can be a sign of moderate to severe sleep apnea, where your airway becomes obstructed while you sleep, and causes you to stop breathing for short periods of time. So see your doctor.

### **ONCE YOU'VE GOTTEN THE WORD THAT IT IS NOTHING MORE SERIOUS, YOU MIGHT WANT TO FIND SOMETHING, ANYTHING THAT CAN STOP YOUR SNORING, AND THERE IS A BIG CHOICE OUT THERE. LET'S START WITH BREATHE RIGHT STRIPS (\$16)**

We're probably all familiar with these from the commercials. They are strips you place on the outside of your nose, that open up your nasal passages. But nasal congestion actually only accounts for about 10-percent of snoring problems. User reviews showed that these were rated the most effective for stopping mild nasal snoring, and they are not as uncomfortable as some devices. But they don't help serious snoring that is caused by the relaxing of the soft palate in the throat. And doctors will tell you, most people breathe through their mouths at night, so nose devices really don't work. They don't do any harm, but they aren't as effective as surgery or some of the mouth devices.

### **ANOTHER NOSE DEVICE IS "BREZ" (\$16) THIS ONE FITS INSIDE THE NOSE. HOW DOES THAT WORK?**

Brez is fairly new, it's only been on the market for about five months. It's actually the first over-the-counter aid that goes inside the nose. It helps, again, to open up the nasal passages, so it will only be effective for mild nasal snoring. The company says, in their trials, 88-percent of users said they experienced improved sleep quality, but we couldn't find any independent testing. Again, it probably won't cause any harm, but it won't help with severe snoring, or snoring that isn't coming from the nasal passages.

### **SINCE THE VAST MAJORITY OF SNORING COMES FROM THE THROAT, HOW DO THROAT SPRAYS RATE?**

There are so many of these on the market. Breathe Right makes one, and most drug stores have their own generic brands. They usually contain some combination of oils, like peppermint oil or menthol oil, along with water and glycerin. They claim to work by lubricating the throat to minimize vibrations. But in fact, much snoring is caused by throat muscles relaxing and sagging into the airways, so lubrication probably won't help much. Duane Reade Anti-Snoring Throat Spray sells for \$14.

### **THERE ACTUALLY IS SOME GOOD RESPONSE TO THIS, THE MOUTH DEVICE. DOES IT WORK?**

This is the Puresleep mouth device, but there are a lot of them on the market. They all work on the same principle, they force the jaw to jut forward, and prevent the soft palate from collapsing, to stop snoring. There are some that actually prevent the tongue from

falling over the windpipe. There has been some good results from this device, with both doctors and patients reporting they work the best of any devices. And you can find any number of them online. These obviously cannot be completely custom fitted to your mouth, but they do have some give so that you can kind of fit them. The most effective of these are the ones that are molded to your mouth by your dentist. But they run about 500-dollars. And they can be very uncomfortable. The Puresleep Mouth Piece sells for \$60.

#### **FINALLY, THE SONA PILLOW (\$80)**

This pillow, and others like it, forces your head to one side, and places your lower jaw slightly down, and that combination opens your passageway. This pillow is FDA approved and so it is actually an exciting breakthrough, a stop-snoring device that you don't have to tape to your body, or shove in your mouth or up your nose. One study actually showed that patients had fewer apnea episodes using the pillow, so it works for more than just mild snoring.

#### **BOTTOM LINE, IS THERE ANYTHING THAT WILL HELP YOU STOP SNORING?**

Probably not altogether, but there are things you can do to help. Avoid alcohol before bedtime. It relaxes your soft palate so much more and makes snoring so much worse. Avoid antihistamines and tranquilizing drugs as well. Run a humidifier to keep the air moist, and, since being overweight is a big contributing factor, you might want to lose a few pounds. Those lifestyle changes will go a long way in keeping that snoring down.