

Sleep Apnoea

Sleep apnoea is a serious but common disorder that stops you breathing while you sleep

What is sleep apnoea?

Sleep apnoea affects both children and adults. As the name suggests, this problem occurs when you sleep. Sleep apnoea is an ailment that occurs when there is an obstruction of the airway by the soft tissue of the throat. This obstruction is noticeable when a patient is sleeping.

Sleep apnoea can also be caused by airways collapsing during a state of relaxation throughout the night and is often linked with snoring and other symptoms like stop/start breathing. This loose soft tissue can vibrate when you sleep, producing a familiar snoring sound. More severe cases of obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA) can cause you to stop breathing temporarily, resulting in a reduction of oxygen to the brain.

Pauses in breathing can last from a couple of seconds, up to minutes and can occur 30 or more times an hour. When you stop breathing, your body forces itself to spasm and momentarily wake up before your normal breathing pattern will kick in. This inconsistency and constant sleep interruption can cause you to feel tired and agitated throughout the day.



Symptoms of sleep apnoea

Sleep apnoea is mostly characterised by its manifestation of loud and persistent snoring. However, there are a number of symptoms which can be a result of sleep apnoea. Night time symptoms such as snoring and choking which are loud or noticeable to yourself and those around you are the most obvious. Daytime symptoms, although just as common, are generally not quite as noticeable for friends, family and colleagues.

Symptoms will need to be identified before any sort of treatment can begin. Although it is important to begin treatment as soon as possible, your dentist must first be able to assess the severity of your case and develop a treatment plan based upon this.

If treatment for sleep apnoea is delayed, it could lead to serious health conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, kidney problems, heart attack, stroke or death. Symptoms of sleep apnoea include:

- Feeling tired, or sleepiness during the day
- Pauses in breathing (while you're asleep)
- Frequent (or loud) snoring
- Waking up with a dry mouth—or a sore throat
- Depression, moodiness or irritability
- Waking up with headaches
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty with memory or learning problems



Does sleep apnoea affect behaviour?

Many people don't realise that sleep apnoea and similar sleep-related conditions can often have an effect on your behaviour. This can be seen in both adults and children.

Behavioural effects in children

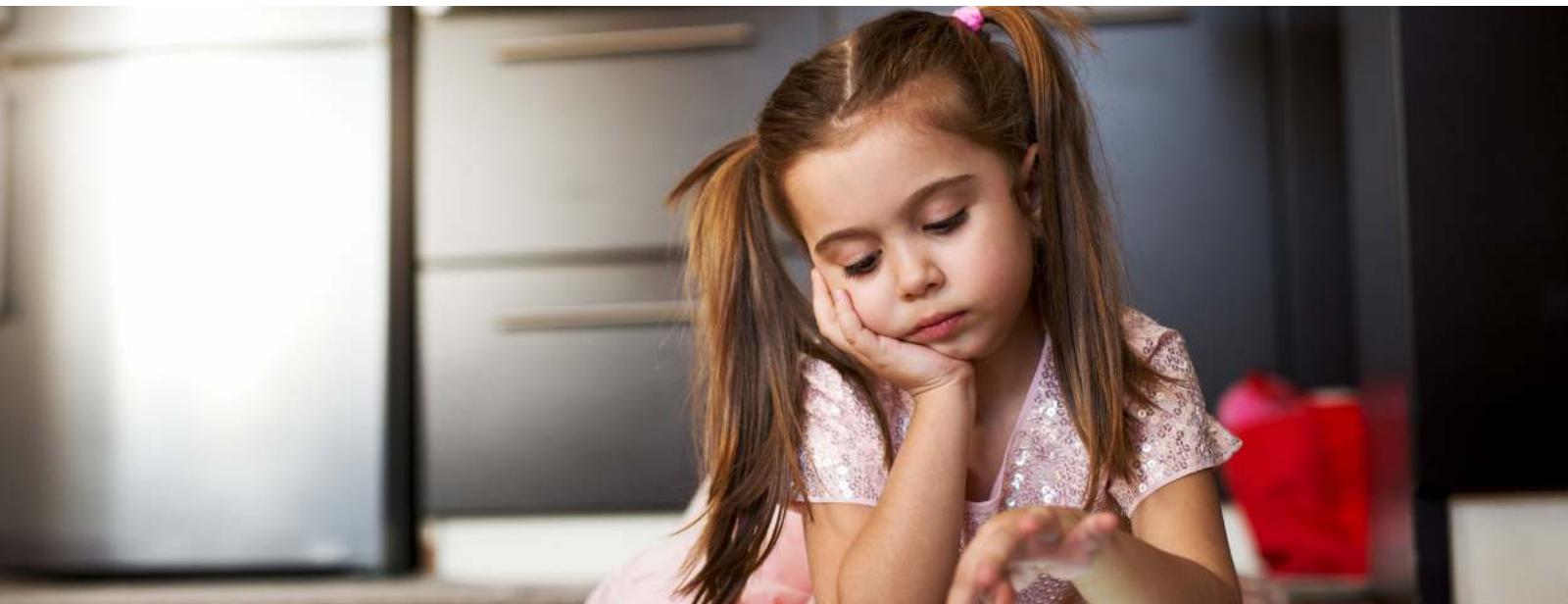
Many children are misdiagnosed with ADHD and similar behavioural problems when in fact these behaviours are being caused by a lack of sleep due to sleep apnoea and airway concerns.

Children who are diagnosed with sleep apnoea, the risk of having behavioural issues is four to five times higher than those children without the condition. Children who have persistent sleep apnoea are six times more likely to display behavioural issues.

Symptoms of sleep apnoea related behavioural issues include:

- Lack of attention
- Disruptive behaviours
- Hyperactivity
- Social incompetency
- Self-care
- Communication
- Behavioural effects in adults

Comparatively to children, adults can experience a number of behaviour related issues due to sleep apnoea. Although these behavioural issues can be persistent, they are often more prominent and noticeable in comparison to your behaviour prior to being diagnosed with sleep apnoea.



What are my treatment options?

There are two main options for treating adults who have sleep apnoea. The first is a dental mouthguard which will help keep the soft tissue out of the throat during sleep.

The mouthguard is good if you:

- Snore
- Have mild sleep apnoea
- Have moderate sleep apnoea

Dental mouthguards can also be used for those patients with severe sleep apnoea who can't tolerate the CPAP machine.

The CPAP machine is a great way to treat sleep apnoea. CPAP stands for Continuous Positive Airways Pressure. To date, it is the most effective treatment for sleep apnoea but, as some people find it impossible to sleep with, they will opt for a dental mouthguard.

For a lot of children, the answer to treating sleep apnoea is the removal of their tonsils. Typically, the removal of tonsils will get rid of sleep apnoea.

If it does not, Bite Dental also offers myofunctional therapy. This type of therapy helps children to correct functions and muscles of the mouth, lips or jaw.



Why visit a dentist for sleep apnoea treatment?

Dentists are not only trained in sleep medicine but have undergone years of study in treating symptoms affecting the craniofacial form and function.

Mode of breathing, malocclusion and total oral health are so inter-related that it only makes sense to be treated holistically by someone who is knowledgeable about your individual condition, rather than separate parties.

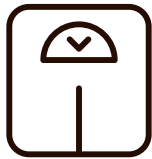
Working with your dentist to help develop an individual treatment plan can not only help cure any airway concerns, but also manage and reduce the risk of re-occurrence.



Are there risk factors for sleep apnoea?

For a long time, it was thought only older men get sleep apnoea. This is a myth. Anyone of any age, gender, weight, or body type can suffer from sleep apnoea.

Some traits which may indicate you have sleep apnoea include (but are not limited to):



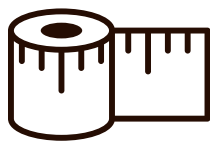
Excessive weight

The more body weight you have the greater chance you have of having sleep apnoea.



Male

Statistically speaking, men are twice as likely than women to get sleep apnoea.



Large neck

Since sleep apnoea is when the airway is blocked, a larger-than-normal neck size can contribute to this problem.



Smokers

Smokers are generally more prone to ailments. Sleep apnoea is no exception.

Sleep apnoea treatment from Bite Dental



The Bite Dental team has helped patients of all ages overcome their sleep apnoea problems.

Sleep apnoea can often be debilitating and incredibly frustrating at times. This is why at Bite Dental we are constantly learning and evolving with modern dentistry to deliver the most innovative treatment, which commands your satisfaction.

If you would like to learn more about sleep apnoea, or to book an appointment, **please contact us today.**

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