

# STOP SNORING and START LIVING BETTER

by Jeannetta Rains, PhD, Director of the Elliot Sleep Evaluation Center

**S**nororing is often the subject of humor and teasing, but snoring can have a serious affect on health and quality of life. Snoring has been documented to exceed 90 decibels, which is equivalent to sleeping next to a chainsaw or jackhammer. Snorers have been known to damage their own hearing with chronic exposure to the loud snore noise. Civil complaints have been filed by neighbors forcing loud snorers to close their windows at night. Snoring has been cited on legal documents as the grounds for divorce. When a husband or wife snores, 80% of these couples end up sleeping in separate beds. But, snoring can do more than make you an unpopular houseguest or chase away the bed partner.

Besides the social ramifications, snoring can also have serious effects on sleep quality and health. Snoring amounts to resistance in breathing and this resistance disturbs sleep and leaves one feeling tired the next day. Snoring leads to increased incidence of sleepiness-related accidents, memory problems and depression. In some cases, the snoring is associated with partial or complete blockages of breathing called sleep apnea. About 15% of snorers are found to have sleep apnea. Sleep apnea increases your risk of high blood pressure and possibly heart failure, stroke, an abnormal heart rhythm (atrial fibrillation) and heart attacks. Although someone with sleep apnea may be asleep for 7 or 8 hours, they may never achieve the deeper stages of sleep. When they wake up, they do not feel rested. Sometimes a bed partner will notice that the person seems to stop breathing when they are asleep, but the episodes that can be observed by others are usually the tip of the iceberg. The majority of sleep apnea sufferers are not aware that they have it. Sleep apnea can affect children as well as adults.

Diagnosis of sleep apnea is possible with a physical examination and specialized sleep tests that measures breathing during sleep.

Though potentially serious, sleep apnea is highly treatable. There are a wide variety of effective treatments depending on the nature and severity of the problem. The most effective treatment for sleep apnea involves wearing in nasal mask during sleep that delivers air under pressure (to hold the airway open); this treatment, continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP), can usually eliminate 100% of the apnea and carries no serious side effects. One million Americans are treated with CPAP nowadays. Other treatments include surgical procedures to modify the airway, dental/oral appliances worn during sleep, weight loss, sleep position changes, and medications in select cases. Treatment can normalize breathing and restore sleep quality; this lifts the associated risk to heart and brain function.



**Sleep Better  
Live Better**

One night with us can change everything!  
Take the first step towards a healthy night's sleep,  
join us for a special presentation by  
**Dr. Jeannetta Rains**  
Director of the Elliot Sleep Evaluation Center.

A good night's sleep is essential to your health. If you're not waking up feeling refreshed and energetic each morning and instead find yourself sleeping long hours only to wake up feeling tired, if you have trouble concentrating at work or if your bed partner keeps you up with their snoring at night, then you'll want to join us and learn how you can get the rest you need to "live better."

Wednesday, April 7  
6 pm to 7:30 pm

Homewood Suites,  
Manchester, NH

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Tour the Elliot Sleep Lab on site at Homewood Suites.  
To register, call Elliot On-Call at 663-4567.

**Elliot Sleep Evaluation Center**  
Elliot Health System is a non-profit organization serving your healthcare needs since 1890

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## Symptoms of a Sleep Disorder

- Snoring
- Breathing Pauses During Sleep
- Problems with Sleeping at Night
- Difficulty Staying Awake During the Day
- Unexplained Decrease in Daytime Performance

For more information about sleep disorders, call the Elliot Sleep Evaluation Center at 663-6680 or Elliot On-Call at 663-4567.

**The Elliot.**  
*Live Better!*

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