

Dental Appliances for Snoring and Obstructive Sleep Apnoea

In some people, snoring is due to narrowing at the base of the tongue. This is especially likely in those whose lower teeth are behind their upper teeth when the mouth is closed. In this situation, a device worn in the mouth that brings the lower jaw (the mandible) forward may be the solution. This is called a dental appliance or a jaw advancement device. They are particularly suitable for people who

- snore
- snore and have minor sleep apnoea
- have moderate sleep apnoea which has not responded to CPAP treatment

They are simple devices that are worn in the mouth at night and hopefully for the whole night. Alternatively, they can be used only when snoring is particularly bad, and maybe only for part of a night.

The side effects are aching of the teeth in the morning and a feeling that the lower jaw is in the wrong place, both of which usually wear off quite quickly. Sometimes the jaw joints will ache, and this may prevent further use of the device, but there is no evidence of any permanent damage if one stops using the device. They may not be appropriate for people with damaged teeth or loose crowns and should not be used by people with removable dentures.

There are many devices available commercially, but they fall into three categories. A study in Cambridge, the TOMADO study (funded by the UK Health Technology Assessment programme), compared how effective specific devices were in these three categories for mild OSA. Minor side effects are common: mouth discomfort and excess saliva.

Boil and Bite Devices

The user makes these themselves by fitting the device to the upper and lower teeth.

They are the cheapest option, but the fit can be less comfortable and they may be less effective than some other types. The SleepPro standard costs £40 and is available from www.sleeppro.com (used in TOMADO study). Another option is the Snorewizard, available from www.snorewizard.co.uk or the Snoreeze device from high street pharmacies for £36. Some of the companies offer money back guarantees if they are not successful. Please be aware that the prices shown may be subject to change.

www.sleepstation.org.uk is an online version of the therapy which our sleep doctors use in clinic to treat patients with insomnia. Sleepstation is available privately and via the NHS

“Semi-Bespoke” dental devices

The user makes dental impressions with a kit and sends the mould to the company, who make a customised mouth piece. An example is the Sleep pro custom, available from www.sleeppro.com (TOMADO) study. This showed increased comfort and better results than the boil and bite device. It was the most effective for the cost, which is £155. Another option is Somnofit, available from www.somnofit.co.uk for £90.

Custom made dental devices

These are made by a dentist using impressions taken directly from your teeth, and aligned so that the correct position for the bottom jaw is determined for you. This means they are often more successful. They are usually made privately and cost in the region of £200- 400. As there is no absolute guarantee that jaw advancement will work, you should talk to your own dentist first about whether he/she feels this is an appropriate possibility for you to try.

Source: Dr Sophie West, Regional Sleep Service, Freeman Hospital, Newcastle Upon Tyne



www.sleepstation.org.uk is an online version of the therapy which our sleep doctors use in clinic to treat patients with insomnia. Sleepstation is available privately and via the NHS