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ARROWHEAD  
LAKES DENTISTRY

## Arrowhead Lakes Dentistry Newsletter

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When filling out our registration form, we are often asked, "Why are you asking me about my neck size?" You might notice this question is grouped with other questions inquiring about sleep, snoring habits, and alertness levels. Although primarily focused on your dental health, Arrowhead Lakes Dentistry is very concerned about general health. These questions are screening for obstructive sleep apnea and other sleeping disorders.

### Snoring and Obstructive Sleep Apnea

[Snoring and obstructive sleep apnea](#) are both breathing disorders that occur during sleep due to narrowing or total closure of the airway. Snoring is a noise created by the partial closure of the airway and may often be no more problematic than the noise itself. However, consistent, loud, heavy snoring has been linked to medical disorders such as high blood pressure. Obstructive sleep apnea is a serious condition; the airway totally closes many times during the night and can significantly reduce oxygen levels in the body and disrupt sleep. In varying degrees, this can result in excessive daytime sleepiness, irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure, reflux, depression, occasionally heart attack and stroke. Sleep apnea does not just put the patient at risk but also everyone around them, as sleep deprivation is responsible for 100,000 car accidents every year.

If we determine that you are at risk of a sleep disordered breathing problem, then we will refer you to a sleep physician for diagnosis, which may involve testing by an overnight sleep recorder in your home or by a sleep study (polysomnogram) in a sleep laboratory. If sleep apnea is confirmed, then we may be able to help by furnishing you with an oral sleep appliance.

### Oral Appliances

Oral appliances may be helpful in the treatment of snoring, upper airway resistance syndrome (UARS), and mild to moderate sleep apnea. Oral appliances are designed to assist breathing by keeping the jaw and tongue forward, thereby opening the airway space in the throat. Even if you are using the CPAP (the most common treatment of sleep apnea),



you might benefit from an oral appliance when you are traveling or camping.

Sleep apnea, unlike other sleep disorders, is all too common. More than 12 million Americans have the dangerous disorder, according to the National Institute of Health. Ninety percent of sufferers that have it don't know it. If you snore loudly, and you wake up after a full night's sleep and are still sleepy, you should get evaluated.

What about the neck size? The neck size is just one piece in the puzzle. The larger the neck, the more likely that there is a issue with sleep disordered breathing. However, it is not absolute: people with small jaws or large tonsils are also likely to develop it. For further information, please visit our [website](#) or give our office a call at 623-362-9616. We would love to answer any questions.

We wish you good health,  
Sincerely,

Ronald Shelley DMD  
Arrowhead Lakes Dentistry PC

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