



Gauge: To take measurements of mouth



Orthoapnoea: The latest invention allows lateral movement of jaws, making it more comfortable for patients



# SNOOZING SOUNDLY

**SNORING AND OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNOEA CAN DEVELOP MEDICAL ISSUES IF LEFT UNCHECKED. AL GARHOUD HOSPITAL OFFERS THE LATEST INVENTION IN THIS SPACE TO KEEP THIS NOISY BEDTIME INCONVENIENCE AT BAY**



Dr Luis Gavin

KT photos by Judin Bernard

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**S**norning in some cases can be more than just a noisy bedtime inconvenience. Besides being embarrassing, and disturbing sleep patterns of you and your bedtime partner, snoring can lead to sleep apnoea – an aggravated snoring condition when the free flow of air is obstructed between the opening of nose and trachea (windpipe).

The relevance of highlighting this condition lies in the study of the number of people who snore. Almost half of the population of adults above the age of 30 snore occasionally and around a quarter snore habitually. A deeper analysis shows that more men snore compared with women, almost triple in number. Of these, about four

per cent of men and two per cent of women develop significant obstructive sleep apnoea – a breeding ground for serious medical conditions.

Explaining the reasons behind snoring, Dr Luis Gavin, Specialist Dentist Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Al Garhoud Hospital, says: “The noise level of snoring depends upon the degree of obstruction of air. If the soft tissues of the upper airway collapse partially, they produce noise, which is referred to as snoring. But if there is a total obstruction for a few seconds, when the patient is unable to breathe for, say, five to 10 seconds, then it is apnoea.”

Snoring, as common as it may seem, should not be plainly ignored by patients. The obstruction of air generates disruptive sleep patterns, and thereby in-

creases fatigability, lethargy, leads to lack of concentration, and increases irritability in the short term.

In the long-term, however, irregular sleep patterns caused by the obstruction of air can affect cardiovascular health and untreated conditions also lead to an increased incidence of pulmonary and systemic high blood pressure as well as ventricular hypertrophy (thickening of the heart muscle). As per industry estimates, almost half of the population with obstructive sleep apnoea eventually develop systemic high blood pressure – further increasing their risk of a heart attack by eight to 10 times.

“In most of the cases, patients can arrest the levels of snoring by undergoing a change in their lifestyle. We recom-

mend exercise, weight loss, avoidance of smoking, food, alcoholic beverages and tranquilisers just before sleep,” suggests the doctor.

Dr Gavin, a Spaniard who has been practising in Europe for around two decades, has introduced the latest invention in the UAE to help such patients. Orthoapnoea® – a device that looks akin to a mouth guard worn by sportspeople, helps reduce noise levels and help patients get a sound sleep with negligible or considerably less noise. “The mouth guard is customised and made in the laboratory here in Dubai. The screws used in Orthoapnoea® are imported from Spain and made of Titanium class 5. The device is very patient-friendly, and can be used at home without any help. A lot of patients in Spain have benefitted from its usage in the last couple of years,” he says. In Dubai, the equipment is made in Qualident Lab and will be available for Dh5,500.

Orthoapnoea® scores high on the ease of use compared to traditional paraphernalia such as a mask that is widely used. It is better in terms of comfort as it allows lateral movement of the jaw, and dramatically reduces snoring. “Before arriving at any conclusions or deciding the procedure, we conduct a thorough analysis. We ask a series of questions, referred as the Berlin survey, to check how snoring affects the patient and his quality of life. We then conduct X-ray of frontal, lateral mouth to study the bones, hard and soft tissues, followed by a CT scan,” concludes Dr Gavin.

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