Snoring Can Be a Serious Health Issue

Take action against sleep apnea.

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Recent studies show that 34 percent of men are habitual snorers, meaning that more than a third of guys regularly saw logs, wreaking havoc on their partners' ability to get a good night's sleep and, in turn, damaging their sex lives. But consistent snoring may mean more than having to sleep on the couch—alone.

According to American Lung Association chief medical officer Norman Edelman, MD—who is also a professor of preventive and internal medicine at Stony Brook University in New York—snoring may be a warning sign for obstructive sleep apnea, a potentially deadly breathing condition that affects 17 percent of African Americans ages 65 and older. African Americans younger than 25 are more than twice as likely to suffer from the disorder compared with their white counterparts, according to the American Lung Association. Sleep apnea (a Greek word meaning "without breath") is a collapse in one's air passage that blocks breathing for 10 seconds or longer several times during sleep, cutting off oxygen flow to the body.

"Almost everybody snores occasionally, but persistent daily snoring is a health problem and should be treated as such," Dr. Edelman says.

Left untreated, sleep apnea may increase an individual's risk for high blood pressure, heart attack and strokes, says Edelman, who stresses that early detection for chronic snoring is key. "If you're getting sleepy during the day, that's a major danger sign," he says. "You need to discuss it with your health care giver."

Visit the American Lung Association at lungusa.org for more information.

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/sleep-health-snore-15724-6443