

# UPPER AIRWAY RESISTANCE SYNDROME

**If you think you have a sleep disorder?**

**Or you know someone who  
may have a sleep disorder?**

**Talk to your family doctor.**

Your family doctor can refer you  
to have this investigated.

If you have any further enquiries, you can call  
Sleep Medicine on (02)49422457



**Dr Antonio Ambrogetti**  
50 Smith St  
Charlestown NSW 2290  
Tel: (02) 49-422-457 Fax: (02) 49-478-128

[www.sleepmedicine.com.au](http://www.sleepmedicine.com.au)

Upper Airway Resistance Syndrome pamphlet/Version 1/Author A.Ambrogetti/Sleep Medicine/January 2020



# Upper Airway Resistance

## What is Upper Airway Resistance Syndrome?

Upper Airway Resistance Syndrome is a condition halfway between pure snoring (noise makers only) and obstructive sleep apnoea (snorers who stop breathing during sleep).

In Upper Airway Resistance Syndrome, the patient does not stop breathing and therefore their oxygen level does not drop (like it does with sleep apnoea). However, the body has to perform extra work to push the air through the narrow passage of the throat during breathing. This extra effort causes disruption of sleep. The person does not necessarily wake up completely but may have broken and unrefreshing sleep.

## How do you know if you've got Upper Airway Resistance Syndrome?

The symptoms of Upper Airway Resistance Syndrome can include the following:

- snoring
- unrefreshing sleep
- excessive daytime sleepiness

There are other signs that a person with Upper Airway Resistance Syndrome might show including:

- being overweight
- irritability
- social withdrawal
- increased risk of car accidents

Upper Airway Resistance Syndrome is diagnosed through an overnight sleep study. Sleep studies can detect the arousals caused by the effort to breathe.

## Treatment

Treatment for Upper Airway Resistance Syndrome is similar to that for snoring and sleep apnoea. The first step involves weight reduction and control of alcohol intake in the evening. If the Syndrome persists, then the patient can try nasal continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) or a mouthguard. Nasal CPAP is a device which keeps the airways open by pumping air through a mask which is placed over the nose.

A mouthguard (or oral appliance) looks like a mouthguard that a sports person might wear. It is designed to keep the lower jaw in a forward position during sleep which helps keep the airway open. In some patients, a surgical procedure to improve nasal passages may help and surgery to the palate may also be useful.

## How does it affect your life?

There are two main problems that may be associated with Upper Airway Resistance Syndrome. The first is snoring and the second is daytime sleepiness. Snoring is mostly a social problem. It may disturb the bed partner or others in the house. Snoring may also be an embarrassing problem if the sufferer has to sleep away from home. At this stage, there are no known health problems that occur due to snoring. The daytime sleepiness associated with Upper Airway Resistance Syndrome can lead to occupational, social and safety problems. Someone who is very sleepy can have problems at work in areas of productivity and safety. Safety problems can also occur around the home and with driving. Socially, someone who is very sleepy tends not to go out as much and eventually can reduce the amount of social contact they have.