

## Surgery for Snoring

Also known as a limited palatoplasty or UVPPP  
(uvulopharyngopalatoplasty)

### Snoring

Snoring is caused by vibration of the soft tissue in the throat as you breathe in and out when you are asleep. It is not a problem when you are awake because at this time the muscle within the soft tissue is kept more taut and therefore does not vibrate.

### Surgical Technique

The operation involves removing some of the soft tissue at the back of the mouth. This can be done in a number of ways including laser, diathermy (an electrical cautery) or with surgical scissors.

### Reason for the Procedure

The aim of the surgery is to reduce the noise you make when you snore. It is extremely unlikely to stop you snoring altogether.

### Preparation

There is nothing specific that you need to do to prepare for this operation. If you take Warfarin tablets, then you will need to stop these a few days before the operation. This will be discussed with you by one of the doctors looking after you.

### The Procedure

The operation is most commonly performed under a general anaesthetic i.e. you will be asleep. It is likely that you will be able to go home the same day. If you are uncertain of either of these points, please ask the doctor looking after you. The operation itself takes only a few minutes and is quite simple to perform.

### Results

You should notice a difference in your snoring within one or two weeks.

## **Alternatives**

One of the most important factors is your weight and the first thing that you should do to improve your snoring is to lose any excess weight. Drinking alcohol before you go to bed may also make your snoring worse. Changing these factors may prevent the need for any surgery.

Another alternative treatment for snoring is a mandibular advancement splint. This is like a large gum shield worn over your lower teeth at night. It maintains the tone in the muscles of the throat by drawing the lower jaw forward and thereby reduces the noise of snoring. The advantage of this treatment is that there is no risk to you, the patient. However, some people find it too uncomfortable to wear and it does not work for every snorer.

## **Benefits**

The advantage of surgery is that it is a one-stop treatment.

## **Side Effects and Risks**

### **Often:**

- **Pain** – This is a very painful procedure. It takes about two weeks to recover fully.

### **Occasional:**

- **Recurrence of snoring problem** – In the long term ie over the next 5-10 years it is quite possible that your snoring will become louder again.
- **Infection** – If your throat becomes more painful, you develop bad breath or coloured discharge or feel unwell with a temperature, you may have an infection. This can be treated with antibiotics from your GP or the hospital.

**Rare:**

- **General anaesthetic** – If you are fit and well the risks of a GA are small. These are increased by other medical problems being overweight and smoking.
- **Bleeding** – Sometimes you can bleed heavily after this surgery. If you do have this problem, please seek medical help ASAP.
- **Nasal regurgitation** – Part of the function of the soft palate is to block off the back of the nose when we swallow so that food and drink only pass downwards into the stomach. This operation removes some of this tissue and therefore some food stuffs may pass into the nose. If this does happen it is very unlikely that it will be a long term problem.

**Post Operative Care**

You will have a sore throat for about two weeks, but regular pain killers will help. You can drive and return to work as soon as you feel well enough.

**Summary**

This operation is to reduce the noise you make whilst snoring. It will not stop you snoring all together. It is a simple procedure, but it will give you a sore throat for about two weeks. As with any surgery, there are risks associated with it, in particular there is a small chance of nasal regurgitation of food or drink and a moderate to high chance that over the next 5-10 years your snoring will become loud again.