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- A MOTHER'S BEST FRIEND

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Where expectant moms can expect it all

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# Older child



## Snoring in Children: Harmless or Harmful?

By: Dr. Jocelyne Charest  
DMD Neuromuscular Dentist at the German Dental &  
Neuromuscular Clinic



One in every 10 children snores, but is a snoring child cute or cause for concern? Thankfully, snoring in children is not quite like adult snoring: a wheeze, a whistle or heavy breathing is about the extent of child snoring, but if you can hear them breathing, that means an obstruction which needs to be investigated.

**A** third to a half of all children who snore also suffer from sleep apnea, which means they are deprived of oxygen while they are sleeping – a serious issue which can affect mental, physical and social development.

### IQ and ADHD

Clinical evidence shows that a child with sleep apnea is 9 times more likely to be in the bottom 10 percent of the class at age 6. A child who snores until the age of 6 is four times more likely to be in the bottom 25 percent of the class before they reach high school. Additionally, children with untreated sleep apnea will on average be 10 IQ points below their potential.

Studies have also shown a link between sleep disorders in children and ADHD: it is possible that children lacking sleep may turn to behaviours associated with ADHD as a way to compensate. Even without conclusive findings on which triggers the other, it is worth monitoring children with ADHD for sleep problems like snoring.

### Detective work

The earlier snoring in children is detected, the earlier it can be corrected, but do not rely exclusively on your child's GP or paediatrician to automatically pick up on this problem: most GPs only get to see

kids when they are sick, which makes it hard for them to assess what normal looks like for that child.

Others may not be aware of the relationship between airways and tooth development. Sleep apnea is often associated with mouth breathing, which leads to distorted growth of the teeth and jaws. Consequently, dentists are often the first people to see subtle changes that can be indicative of such a problem, and a trained neuromuscular dentist has a better chance of figuring out what is really going on.

### Get Listening

If you have children or grandchildren: listen to them sleeping. They should be breathing through their nose and mouth, and their breathing should be silent. If you see mouth breathing or hear noisy breathing, get it checked out.

If you know children being treated for ADHD, find out if they snore or are mouth breathers – you could be saving some child from a lifetime of misdiagnosis, medication and other problems.

### How we can help

After an examination, if necessary we will refer your child to an ENT (ear, nose and throat) specialist or a sleep physician for confirmation of the diagnosis. If necessary, the treatment can be a tonsillectomy (removal of tonsils by surgery) to remove obstructions to a clear airway – in recent years, the use of lasers has even led to painless procedures and quicker healing. Later on, a palatal expander may be used to help the development of their palate.

*To promote early detection, neuromuscular dental examination for children under five is free of charge. You can reach Dr. Jocelyne at the German Dental & Neuromuscular Clinic on: +971 04 379 47 22.*