

## MEDIA RELEASE

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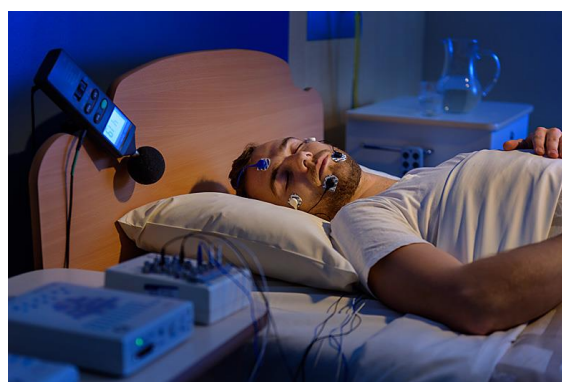
BURNSIDE  
HOSPITAL

### Don't let a sleep disorder ruin your relationship

While a loudly dozing bed-partner is certainly annoying and has left many of us missing a few hours of sleep, spare a thought for those whose partners chronic snoring is taking a long-term toll on their own long-term health, their work, and even impairing their ability to drive. The Burnside Sleep Centre sees many patients whose partners are at the end of their tether from years of 'secondary' sleep loss.

Adults generally need 7-8 hours of sleep but about a third of us don't achieve this and the cause is often a sleep disordered bed partner. A typical patient at the Burnside Sleep Centre arrives as the behest of an exhausted partner looking for solutions to snoring and other disruptive sleep behaviours.

The Sleep Health Foundation states that about 40% of men and 30% of women have at least mild snoring, on at least some nights with middle-age increasing the risk factor. The loudest snoring ever recorded at the Sleep Centre was 90 decibels, almost as loud as a petrol lawn mower at 96 decibels!



According to Renee Galka, Principal Sleep Technician at the Burnside Sleep Centre, the health effects associated with the long-term deprivation of adequate sleep include reduced coordination, an impairment of judgement, poor work performance and an increased risk of emotional problems such as depression and relationship strain.

*"Many of the sleep disorders that impact a sleep partner have been going on for a long time and have become major sticking points in a relationship. We see lots of people (usually men) that have been sent packing to the Sleep Centre by their long-suffering partners".*

Renee Galka, Principal Sleep Technician at Burnside Sleep Centre

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Even worse, the physiological similarities between the effects of lack of sleep and those associated with blood alcohol content could also mean a contribution to road or work accidents.

There is plenty that can be done to solve a snoring problem, or other sleep disorders that affect the restorative sleep of a person (or their partner). A Sleep Study at the Burnside Sleep Centre is conducted onsite overnight and diagnoses sleep disorders or lifestyle factors, which can then be treated.

A sleep study (polysomnogram) involves small sensors being applied to the skin of the scalp, chest, finger and legs, enabling precise monitoring of a range of functions including oxygen levels, breathing, brainwave

activity and eye and leg movements. This continuously records during sleep and a thorough understanding of a patient's sleep can be achieved and allows precise diagnosis of sleep disorders.

Some of the conditions that may affect the sleep health of a bed partner include:

Snoring:

A narrowing at the back of the throat can cause the tissues surrounding the opening to vibrate, which in turn can cause the sounds of snoring. The narrower the airway, the louder the snoring becomes. While often regarded as just an annoyance to the sufferer or their bed partner, snoring can cause significant sleep disturbance. Snoring is often an indicator of another, more serious sleep disorder called Obstructive Sleep Apnoea.

Restless Leg Syndrome:

People with Restless Leg Syndrome often report a "creeping" or crawling" sensation in the legs, which is relieved with movement. The symptoms are most commonly experienced when the person is lying down and trying to relax. As a result, most people with RLS have difficulty falling and remaining asleep.

Periodic Limb Movement:

Many people with RLS also have a related sleep disorder called Periodic Limb Movements in Sleep (PLMS). PLMS is characterised by involuntary limb movements during sleep, which occur every 10 to 60 seconds. Some people may experience hundreds of such movements per night, arousing them out of sleep and disturbing the sleep of both the sufferer and bed partner.

Parasomnias:

The term parasomnia covers a variety of unusual physiological and behavioural phenomena which can occur during sleep, ranging from sleep-walking, sleep-talking, night terrors, to more complex behaviours such as acting out your dreams. These can be violent and can cause injury, and can even involve unusual behaviours such as sleep-eating or even sleep-sex.

## **The Burnside Sleep Centre celebrates World Sleep Day on March 16.**

A referral to the Burnside Sleep Centre can be made via your GP or see our Sleep Centre listing of our visiting Sleep Physicians: <https://www.burnsidehospital.asn.au/services/sleep-centre/>

### **About the Burnside Hospital**

Burnside Hospital is a not for profit community-based hospital that has 76 beds, five operating theatres and a range of services and clinics to care for and support the thousands of patients who choose to have their healthcare needs met at the hospital each year. The Burnside Hospital Sleep Centre is independent from any CPAP supplier. For more information about the hospital, please refer to the website: [www.burnsidehospital.asn.au](http://www.burnsidehospital.asn.au)

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