

Snores and More Snores

Enjoying a night of peaceful, uninterrupted sleep should be a right, and not a privilege. In our house, however, a silent night is a rare occurrence indeed.

Sitting at my desk late at night I watch the stars flicker in the sky, as I do most nights. It's a great way to relax my mind and body as I prepare for blissful sleep. Then, it happens. The inevitable slice through the silence. It jars me back to full lucidity; sounds as though a freight train will appear any second from under my desk. Of course, there is no train. The cause of the chaos is the collective snores of several Cavalier King Charles spaniels.

In their basket under my desk, all six of my dogs curl together in peaceful slumber. These are no ordinary dogs, but a wonderful breed, small in size, with a short muzzle. They are heartbreakingly cute, but deafening noisy when they all begin to snooze and snore at the same time. And snore they do; every one of them. It's caused by the way they turn their necks to tuck their heads in. The airway becomes constricted, and the rumble begins. The only way to quiet the snoring is to straighten their necks out. I would do it, but they look so cute. I just can't bring myself to disturb them.

And so, it's off to bed. I cozy up to my partner, only to notice that he's settled down with a bedtime snack: buttered toast, sliced cheese and a glass of warm milk. I can hear it now; in about one hour, the snoring will be loud enough to shatter windows, and certainly shatter my dreams of a good night's sleep. Dairy products are not a smart nighttime snack for anyone who snores. Maybe there's room to sleep in one of the kids' rooms.

My teenage daughter, the mouth breather of the family, is already sawing logs. I gently wake her; just enough for her to put on the chin-up strip that helps her to sleep with her mouth closed, and eliminates snoring. My son sleeps in the adjacent room. Another natural snorer, he has a Continuous Positive Air Pressure system, or CPAP, beside his bed. He hates wearing the device, so of course, it's on the floor. I give him a soft wake-up nudge and help him put on the CPAP. Throughout the night, it will supply a steady flow of oxygen, helping him to breathe easier, and quieter.

By this time I'm wide-awake. Tip-toeing to the kitchen, I bump into my mother. Dad and mom are visiting for a few days, and Dad's a hearty snorer himself. Like most men, he is stubborn and refuses to try nasal strips or any of the other devices that are available to help alleviate snoring. Mom is also looking for a quiet place to sleep, and so we each fix our husbands a cup of warm water and honey, hoping to quiet the snores.

I take the tea back to my bedroom and try to maneuver my husband onto his side, where he'll be far less likely to snore. Maybe if I can catch a few quiet moments before he flips back over, it will be just enough time for me to slip away into that elusive, peaceful sleep. Good night!