

# What's New With Snoring?

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Habitual snoring affects over 40 million Americans and their bed partners. The problem is more frequent in males, usually those that are greater than 50 years old and overweight, and continues to worsen with age. Snoring affects 45% of the population, with one out of every four persons being a habitual snorer. Snoring is the actual noise generated by the vibration of soft tissues of the palate and throat. Snoring frequently brings a patient to a physician not on their own accord, but secondary to the demand of their bed partner. Snoring does not bother most snorers, and many are not even aware that they snore. The spouse or bed partner suffers the most, sometimes leading to significant social and marital problems and disruption of family life. Snoring can actually disturb the sleep pattern, making restful sleep difficult. Prior to the advent of the new FDA approved Pillar Insert System, patients had to undergo much more serious and painful procedures of the palate and throat to treat their snoring. Many of those procedures were not helpful and were sometimes detrimental.

Patients and their physicians can choose a minimally invasive snoring treatment that is specifically designed to produce a more lasting effect after a single virtually painless procedure. The Restore Medical "Pillar System" received market clearance from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in October 2003, and has since been implanted in over 700 patients in the United States. It is a well-accepted fact that the stiffening of the soft palate can reduce snoring. Other procedures do this by scarring or removing the palatal tissue by surgery or laser. Though these can be effective for some patients, many others have to undergo multiple procedures to maintain any benefit. For many patients, there is no substantial benefit at all. This inconsistency can be attributed to a variety of factors, including the unpredictability of scarring responses among patients and the body's natural tendency to remodel scars over time in the absence of a recurring means of maintaining the scar tissue. To address these issues, the "Pillar System" offers a new solution for snoring therapy. The pillar system is specifically designed to reduce snoring by stiffening the soft palate using mechanical means in addition to fibrosis caused by the presence of an insert. This approach has been based on an understanding of the patho-physiology of snoring. The pillar system is designed to be permanent and is associated with a fibrotic response that alters the dynamic response of the soft palate to air flow and substantially reduces the severity of snoring in many patients. Each patient receives three inserts into the soft palate tissue, one midline and two laterally. The recommended placement and number of inserts has been carefully developed in clinical studies. Once in place, the inserts induce a fibrotic response that can both encapsulate and secure the inserts while further stiffening the palatal tissue. The insert is carefully designed to provide these effects without adversely affecting normal palatal function. In addition, the insert is designed to be removable, which provides patients and their physician flexibility for other treatment options in the future.

The pillar palatal insert system is an in-office procedure done under local anesthesia. The entire procedure lasts an average of 20-30 minutes. The pillar system consists of an insert and its delivery tool. The pillar insert has the potential to dramatically improve the quality of life of the habitual snorer. Unlike other therapies, most patients start to see results in a few days after a single treatment. The pillar insert is designed to be permanent, offering the potential for a lasting effect to the soft palate structure and is a virtually painless procedure.

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