

Sleep & Breathing: What Your Dentist Sees

Sleep-disordered breathing (SDB) is far more common than most people realize and your mouth often shows the first signs. As your dentist, I see clues during every exam that may point to a breathing or sleep problem you didn't know you had.

The Mouth Tells All

- Worn, cracked, or broken teeth (from clenching and grinding at night)
- Scalloped tongue (caused by the tongue being pressed against teeth during labored breathing) or tongue tie
- A narrow or high-vaulted palate (less room for the airway)
- Enlarged tonsils or elongated uvula
- Mouth breathing, dry mouth, or chronic bad breath
- Tooth erosion from acid reflux (common with SDB)

Many people with SDB don't snore loudly or feel tired, but the damage still accumulates silently over years.

Why It Matters

Untreated sleep-disordered breathing is linked to:

Memory and concentration problems (Alzheimer's and Dementia)

Cancer

Cardiac Conditions (Specifically A-fib)

Depression and anxiety

Obesity

Parkinson's Disease

My Role

As your dentist I can not legally diagnose sleep apnea, but I am trained to look for these signs and discuss them with you. I am able to screen your sleep and work with a primary care physician or a sleep doctor to address poor sleep quality. Think of it as one more way your dental visits protect your overall health.

As always, I am grateful to be entrusted with your dental care. My team and I enjoy the opportunity to get to know each of you personally. We don't take lightly our role in optimizing your oral and physical health and we look forward to helping you in this journey.

- Dr. Jessica L Bishop DDS