Flinders road-tests new anti-snore pillow

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Credit: AI-generated image (disclaimer)

Sleep researchers from Flinders University and the Adelaide Institute for Sleep Health are road-testing a new pillow that could help alleviate snoring for back sleepers.

Made by Adelaide-based pillow manufacturer TVS Foam Products, the TVS Snore No More Pillow is specially designed to reduce the volume and frequency of snoring for chronic snorers who primarily sleep on

their backs.

The memory foam bed pillow is manufactured with a slight tilt designed to gently drop the head backwards during sleep to promote a straighter, stiffer and more open upper airway than conventional pillows.

Flinders University sleep expert Associate Professor Peter Catcheside is currently testing the effectiveness of the prototype in a small clinical trial at the Adelaide Institute for Sleep Health, based at Repatriation General Hospital, with the results expected early next year.

Funded by the Medical Device Partnering Program at Flinders, the study is using questionnaires and laboratory studies to monitor snoring, sleep quality, head position and pillow comfort among 10 back sleepers who have been using the pillow for two weeks compared to their usual pillow over an equivalent period.

Associate Professor Catcheside said the pillow is designed to straighten the neck to help stiffen the airway and reduce snoring.

"In the overnight lab studies we are using sound level measurements to monitor snoring and a motion tracking system to measure head position and jaw and neck angles. These are quite difficult to measure and are not well known, even with a normal pillow," Associate Professor Catcheside said.

"On normal pillows, back sleepers may tend to flex their chin towards their chest making the airway floppier and more prone to partial collapse and snoring," he said.

"The anti-snore pillow is bigger than a normal pillow and is designed with a ramp to tilt the head backwards slightly."

Associate Professor Catcheside said anaesthetic studies have shown that neck position has major effects on snoring and airflow through the upper airway, supporting the concept.

"It's still too early to determine the impact of the pillow but if the results do show reduced snoring and users find it comfortable, then it could be useful for back sleeping snorers and their partners," he said.

Mr Seddon, director of TVS Foam Products, said his preliminary observations showed the pillow "drastically reduces" loud constant snoring to a more socially acceptable level, and in most cases reduces snoring periods to about three to four times per night of low level intermittent snoring.

"Many anti-snore products are designed to wake the snorer, or to at least keep them semi-awake, which only stops the snoring until the snorer goes back to sleep," Mr Seddon said.

"Other anti-snoring methods, such as nasal strips, sprays and even surgery, are not guaranteed to work so until now there's been little hope for snorers," he said.

Provided by Flinders University