

# Positioning for Optimal Sleep

Head and body position can be a very important adjunct to your treatment for snoring and sleep apnea.

## Body position:

In general, sleeping on your back (supine) position will be the worst position for snoring and sleep apnea. For some individuals the difference between sleeping on your stomach or side (non-supine) versus sleeping on your back can be so dramatic that in the supine position the sleep apnea is severe and on the side it may be mild or even normal.

There are devices that exist that can help promote staying off your back:



**Night shift:** will beep or vibrate to alert you to move off your back

## Contact Info:

**Maurits Boon, MD**

**Colin Huntley, MD**

Thomas Jefferson University  
Otolaryngology – Head and  
Neck Surgery

925 Chestnut Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Phone: 215-955-6760

Fax: 215-503-3736

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**Velcro belt:** Places a wedge that makes it difficult to shift on your back.

While it is recommended that you avoid sleeping on your back, it is not always possible that people can maintain non-supine sleep.

Elevating the head of bed can be of some additional limited benefit for sleep apnea. The impact of this body position is generally more limited. It is possible to use a Wedge pillow to elevate your head and body slightly.

## Head position:

Head position can also have significant impact for sleep apnea and snoring. In general, the worst position for sleep is to have the chin on the chest. The ideal head position for maintaining your airway is called the sniffing position:



As seen in this diagram the sniffing position means: flexion of the neck (neck forward) and extension of the head (head back).

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There are special pillows that can help to maintain this position during sleep and include:



Memory foam cervical positioning pillows

Additionally, your physician may recommend the using a soft cervical collar during sleep.



Soft cervical collar