

Suspected GERD + Sleep Apnea:

How Acid Reflux Can Disrupt Your Breathing and Sleep

A patient guide from Dr. Bennett's Office

The Mouth-Gut-Sleep Connection

Did you know that **acid reflux (GERD)** and **obstructive sleep apnea (OSA)** often go hand in hand? Here's how they interact:

- Reflux irritates the airway. Acid can rise into the throat during sleep, causing inflammation and narrowing of the upper airway.
 - OSA worsens GERD. Repeated breathing disruptions increase pressure in the chest and abdomen, causing acid to rise upward.
 - This cycle leads to poor sleep, dry mouth, inflammation, and an increased risk of both oral and systemic diseases.
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Signs GERD May Be Affecting Your Mouth and Sleep

- Worn or sensitive teeth
 - Dry mouth or burning tongue
 - Frequent nighttime coughing or throat clearing
 - Bad breath upon waking
 - Snoring or waking up suddenly during the night
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Practical Tips to Break the Cycle

- Eat smaller meals more frequently and avoid eating within 2–3 hours of going to bed.

- Elevate the head of your bed by 6–8 inches to reduce nighttime reflux.
- Replace acidic beverages (like soda or citrus juices) with alkaline water when possible.
- Manage stress with relaxation techniques or light physical activity.
- Rinse with water after acidic meals to protect enamel.
- Discuss saliva support and enamel-strengthening products with your dental provider if you experience dry mouth.

Managing reflux can reduce inflammation, improve airway health, and support better sleep.

Ask us how airway-focused dentistry can help restore your body's natural healing rhythm.