



A Good Nights Sleep

by: Catherine Elliott Escobedo

Does this story sound familiar? Take the Sleep Disordered Breathing Questionnaire for Children

1. Snore at all?
2. Snore only infrequently (1 night/week)
3. Snore fairly often (2-4 nights/week)
4. Snore habitually (5-7 nights/week)
5. Have labored, difficult, loud breathing at night
6. Have interrupted snoring where breathing stops for 4 or more seconds
7. Have stoppage of breathing more than 2 times in an hour
8. Hyperactive
9. Mouth breathes during day
10. Mouth breathes while sleeping
11. Frequent headaches in morning
12. Allergic symptoms
13. Excessive sweating while asleep
14. Talks in sleep
15. Poor ability in school
16. Falls asleep watching TV
17. Wakes up at night
18. Attention deficit
19. Restless sleep
20. Grinds teeth
21. Frequent throat infections
22. Feels sleepy and/or irritable during the day
23. Have a hard time listening and often interrupts
24. Fidgets with hands or does not sit quietly
25. Ever wets the bed
26. Bluish color at night or during the day
27. Speech Problems

My 5-year-old son Tomás has always been a sweet, silly, and perpetually happy little guy, a little shy but always friendly, and not fearful of much—during the day—but for the past two and a half years (that's over 900 days for those of us who were counting!) we'd see a marked change in him around bedtime. As soon as it became clear that it was time to settle into bed for the night, his smiling little face would crinkle into a tense frown and he'd start crying not to be left alone in his bedroom. He was desperately afraid of the nightmares that disturbed his sleep nearly every night—typical childhood bad dream material ranging from getting lost in a dark forest, being pursued by monsters, and even fighting off zombies! It was clear he was terrified.

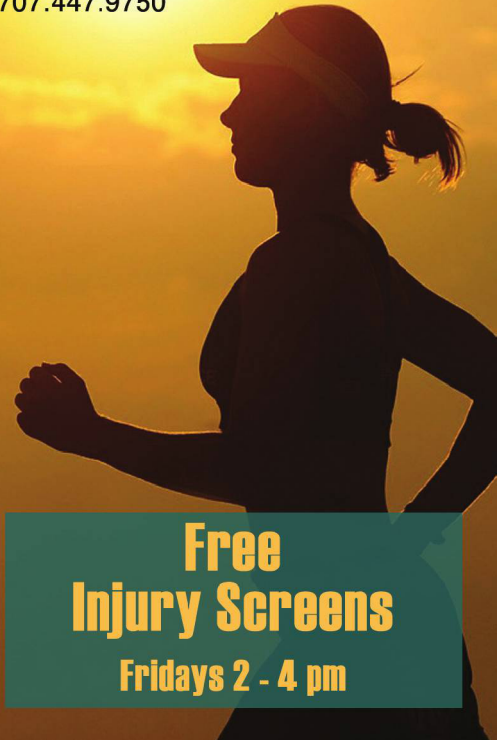
It was not unusual for him to leave his bedroom two to four times each night, sometimes drenched in sweat. After a while, sweet kid that he is, he didn't cry or try to wake us, but would do his best to quietly sneak into our bed or his older brother's. Sometimes we'd even find him lying on the carpet near the foot of the bed. No matter how much of a stealth ninja he tried to be while bed-hopping each night, we almost always woke up, in part because he was a very loud sleeper. He would grind his teeth until they'd make an unbearable sound almost like nails on a chalkboard, snore like a grown man, and breathe through his mouth as though he had a bad cold. Tomás developed puffy purple circles under his eyes and had seasonal allergy symptoms that wouldn't go away even with medication. After a few years of this it became clear that we—me, my husband, my 11-year-old, and mostly Tomás—were all sleep-deprived, cranky, and frustrated in the mornings.

We tried everything we could think of to help him: we gave him lavender baths and read him pleasant stories at bedtime, made sure he didn't watch scary movies or tv shows, slept on the floor next to him until he fell asleep, placed an angel statue on his bedside table to watch over him, and recited a special bedtime prayer so he could feel safe and have good dreams. We also tried hanging a Native American Dream-



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catcher above his bed, rearranging his room for better Feng Shui, and burning sage to clear away any negative mojo! Nothing ever worked.

On May 10th I took my older son James to a regular orthodontic appointment at Dr. Anthony Marino's office with Tomás in tow. We had chosen Dr. Marino immediately at our initial consultation after we had already talked to two other local orthodontists. Not only was it clear that Dr. Marino seemed to know more about cutting-edge orthodontic treatment for children than the others, he was also genuinely excited about the work he was doing, had a staff that enjoyed working at his office, and a large wall of photos of beaming clients of all ages. He also offered the most reasonable price for the overall treatment!

Dr. Marino and I got to talking during James's visit that day and he noticed that Tomás had circles under his eyes (and probably noticed mine too). He asked me how he slept at night. I told Dr. Marino that Tomás grinds his teeth and has horrible nightmares that make him wake up often, and a lightbulb seemed to go off above his head. He asked me if I had time to fill out a healthstart checklist, which asked about symptoms that seemed unrelated to mouth or teeth issues, like if my child exhibited: nightmares, snoring, chronic allergies, mouth breathing, dark circles under the eyes, and sleep issues. Bingo! Yes, yes, and yes!

We left the office with a remarkable little mouthpiece called a "Habit Corrector" that we hoped could offer Tomás some relief. Dr. Marino explained that the mouthpiece would correct airway issues and Tomás's mouth position while also guiding his teeth to come in straight. (I had consulted by phone with my husband who was out of town for a few days and we decided to give it a try because we trusted Dr. Marino, but we had never heard of any other children using this device.)

The transformation we saw in Tomás's sleep and the ripple effects on all of our lives since getting this device was immediate and near miraculous! As I write this piece, it has now been exactly 30 days since Tomás began wearing his mouthpiece every night. He has now slept through the night, in his bed, without any bad dreams, for 30 nights in a row! No exceptions. Every night!

When my husband returned from his business trip a few days after Tomás began wearing the mouthpiece, he was blown away at the change and said, "Without a doubt, this has to be due to the new mouthpiece. Incredible!"

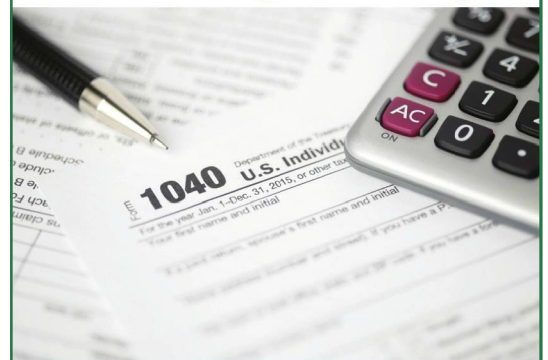
The dark circles under Tomás's eyes have now faded, and I've stopped giving him allergy medication. He wakes up well-rested and smiling. He has been wearing the habit corrector since day one with enthusiasm because it's comfortable and he knows it has helped him immensely. The other day we were walking to the park and out of the blue he turned to me and said, "Mommy, I'm so lucky I got my mouthpiece and don't have to have bad dreams anymore." Yes, he is. We all are. ■

You can learn more about the Habit Corrector at www.magicbraces.com or call 707-448-6271 to make an appointment with Dr. Anthony Marino, DDS, MS, Orthodontic Specialist. His office is located at 290 Alamo Dr., Suite B in Vacaville.



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