

## **THE LASER ASSISTED UVULOPALATOPLASTY (LAUP)**

Snoring, which is caused by vibration of the soft tissues of the palate affects at least 85 million Americans. For those patients without significant sleep apnea, laser assisted uvulopalatoplasty may be an appropriate technique to reduce snoring. This office based surgical procedure is done under local anesthesia whereupon part of the uvula and associated soft palatal tissues are excised to shorten the palate and reduce the uvular size. By shorten and recontouring the palate and uvula the vibratory surface can be markedly diminished.

### **Surgical Procedure:**

The laser assisted uvulopalatoplasty is done under local anesthesia in our office Operating Room Suite. The palate is first anesthetized topically with anesthetic spray allowing subsequent injections of local anesthesia. The carbon dioxide laser is used to vaporize away the excess tissue in layers. The uvula is also reduced in size. Generally, there is minimal bleeding associated with the laser procedure. The vaporized edges will heal over the following 1-2 weeks. During the post-operative period, there is some discomfort, which will be treated with Ibuprofen (Motrin) or a stronger medication such as Tylenol #3, or Percocet. Salt water irrigations are also helpful. You may also be placed on a short course of steroid liquid which will cut down on swelling and discomfort. Antibiotics are also given to speed up the healing process. The laser uvulopalatoplasty can be repeated approximately 4-6 weeks later if residual snoring is still present.

### **Risks and Complications:**

As with any procedure, laser surgery does carry some risks. In this procedure the main risks are the potential for incomplete cure of the snoring, bleeding, potential change in voice, swallowing difficulties and injury to adjacent tissues with the laser. It is not clear as to whether this procedure cures snoring on a permanent basis since no long-term studies are available at this point. We suspect as with all surgical procedures of this type, the tissue over time may soften up and stretch causing increased vibration leading to recurrent snoring. If these events occur, a subsequent LAUP could be performed.