
TROUBLESHOOTING YOUR CPAP

Trouble getting used to CPAP or feeling claustrophobic?

- It may help to wear the CPAP device for short periods of time during the day while awake and practice breathing with the machine. Some patients have compared adapting to CPAP with learning how to snorkel, swim or scuba dive. Your body and brain will become accustomed to CPAP over time.
- Remember, there are many different type of masks and sizes. To assist comfort levels, it could be as simple as changing from one mask to another.

Stuffy or dry nose?

- Most CPAP machines come with an adjustable heated humidifier. Turn the humidifier up for more moisture. If water starts forming in your tubing and mask, turn down the humidifier.
- If you are still experiencing a dry nose, try saline nasal spray or gel at bedtime.
- For nasal congestion, try a steroid nasal spray like Flonase, Nasonex or an antihistamine, which can be obtained over the counter or prescribed by our providers.

Waking with a dry mouth?

- Try increasing the setting on your humidifier.
- You may be sleeping with your mouth open, which will cause it to dry out.

Try wearing a chin strap (your medical equipment supplier can provide this) to help keep your mouth closed.

- If you are still opening your mouth, you may need to try a full face mask that covers your nose and your mouth. If you decide a full face mask is right for you, be sure to increase the humidifier setting to help avoid a dry throat.

Is air leaking around your mask?

- Try readjusting your headgear. The straps should be loose while still creating a seal. If you still have a leak, you may need to contact your medical equipment supplier for proper mask sizing and fitting or come see us and bring your mask with you.



- Wash your face nightly to reduce the oil on your skin and to provide a better seal.
- Facial hair, like a moustache, may also cause the mask to not properly seal.

Do you feel like the pressure is set too high or experiencing trouble exhaling with CPAP?

- Try using the “ramp” feature located on your CPAP, which decreases the pressure to a low pressure setting and then gradually increases it over a period of time. You may use the ramp feature as many times as necessary. If you awaken during the night and feel the pressure is high, use the ramp button. The ramp button serves as “training wheels” to help you adapt to CPAP.

Nasal Irritation?

- “Pillow” type CPAP circuits have a small, soft piece of plastic that fits at the nostrils. Sometimes the plastic may irritate the nostrils.
- If so, try using chapstick or cortisone cream. Apply a light coating in the nostrils before putting on CPAP and see if this helps.
- Also, make sure the straps supporting the mask are not too tight. They may be causing excessive pressure on the nostrils.