

CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) therapy

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio tape or computer disk, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please telephone the PALS desk on 01271 314090.

You have been given a CPAP machine to take home and use. This is because Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (the stopping breathing whilst asleep due to airway collapse) has been confirmed. CPAP splints the airways open to prevent this happening. You must use this machine every night because it will enable you to breathe normally whilst asleep which should help you to have a better quality sleep resulting in reduction or elimination of daytime drowsiness.

This is a long-term loan machine. If you move out of area or do not need it anymore, then it must be returned to us.

Initially it may take time to adjust to the machine and mask but this is normal and it is very important for your health to persist with it until you are comfortable using it. CPAP therapy improves health by taking the strain off of your heart which leads to a reduction in risk of heart attack or stroke.

Cleaning

Machine should be kept clean using a damp cloth **weekly**. If your machine has a humidifier, the heater plate and surrounding area also need to be kept clean to prevent bacteria growing there.

Hose needs to be rinsed through with warm soapy water **every week**. Hold both ends in one hand, covered by your palm; give a good shake, rinse through and then hang up to air dry.

Mask cushion needs to be removed from mask and rinsed out with warm soapy water daily and left to air dry.

The mask should not be over tightened and should sit on the face like a hovercraft cushion. When fitted correctly there should be minimal noise from it. The holes on the front of the mask allow the carbon dioxide in the air you breathe out to escape and should never be covered because this could cause suffocation. Over tightening of the mask will cause a leak and this should be avoided. If the mask is noisy the Velcro straps will need to be adjusted until there is minimal noise which means that the mask should fit well.

Filters in back of machine need to be checked for dust weekly and then changed every 3 months.

Water pots need to be washed out with warm soapy water on a daily basis, rinsed and left to air dry. Refill at night with clean water using either distilled water or cooled, boiled water and do not allow them to run dry.

Potential side effects and solutions

Claustrophobia – feeling as though there is too much air pressure or feeling claustrophobic are common feelings when initially starting CPAP therapy. These feelings almost always disappear over time with patience and perseverance. To begin with you may find it helpful to practice with the mask by sitting quietly in a chair either watching TV or listening to music just to get yourself used to it and take your mind off it. This will help you to relax and feel comfortable before you use it at night.

Dryness – this can occur in your mouth, nose or throat whilst using CPAP treatment. If this occurs you may need a humidifier added to your machine which can be done at your next appointment if required. However the dryness may settle after a few days of being on treatment and may only be an initial reaction.

Cold air – if you find that the air is too cold, try increasing your humidity setting, otherwise you can try putting the hose under a fleece or blanket. Always ensure that the humidified CPAP machine is kept lower than the level at which you sleep.

DVLA

DVLA guidelines currently state that CPAP therapy must be used **every night for a minimum of 4 hours per night**. If the DVLA ask your consultant for a compliance report and our data indicates that you are not meeting this criteria then your licence may be withdrawn.

Follow-up

Your first follow-up appointment will normally be in 4-6 weeks of starting on treatment. If you remain on long-term treatment you will have at least an annual outpatient clinic follow-up. This is to check on symptom control and effectiveness of the treatment you are receiving.

Please ensure that you bring your machine to every clinic follow-up including the electric lead, hose and mask. We need to check this equipment and access data from the machine.

Travel

If you need to travel overseas please ask for a travel letter which we will be happy to provide for you. When travelling on an aircraft your CPAP machine should be checked in as **hand luggage** and not put into the hold of the aircraft.

Contact details

If you have any further queries please don't hesitate to contact the respiratory nurses on **01271 311600**. However because we are not an emergency service, please be aware that it may take us 3 working days to get back to you.

We work: Monday – Friday, 8.00am – 4.00pm
We are: Lynn Greenfield and Sharon Newcombe

