

POSSIBLE PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS FOR PATIENTS WITH CPAP

You may have some problems arise with the use of your CPAP. We have collected some of the common remedies for common problems related to the CPAP. These are things you can do to decrease or resolve some of the problems which may occur with CPAP. These are only suggestions and you may have your own solutions to these problems.

1. Dry Eyes: Dry eye may occur when your mask leaks air or you may have air flow through a small duct that drains your tears.

Solution:

1. Make sure your mask makes a tight seal around your face. Sometimes this requires loosening the mask straps to eliminate the folds in the inner membrane
2. Use artificial tears eye drops in each eye before going to bed and after waking up.

2. Dry Nose: One of the functions of the nose is to increase the amount of water in the air before going to your lungs. When large volumes of air pass through your nose your nose dries out and may become very irritated. You may also note a sore throat.

Solution:

1. Your machine should have a humidifier which increases the water content of the air from your CPAP machine. If you do not have this you need to get one from your home health company. **Be sure to change the water as instructed, and use only distilled water.**
2. Nasal salt solution sprays (Ocean Spray) four times per day. **Do not use medicated decongestants; These will only make your nose worse.**
3. Sometimes applying Vaseline to the inside rim of your nose may reduce the soreness. Be careful not to get any petroleum based products on the mask since the mask may breakdown.
4. For people who forced air heat, you may wish to get a humidifier for your house to increase the water in the air of your house during the winter.
5. Heated humidifiers can deliver extra moisture.

3. Stuffy Nose: A stuffy nose may come from several different reasons. The stuffiness may indicate that the tissue inside the nose has become swollen. This may occur when the nose is too dry, when you have an allergy or when you have a cold.

Solution:

1. Make sure the air intake of CPAP machine is clean not near a dusty or moldy environment.
2. Get a humidifier for your CPAP machine.
3. Change the filter on your CPAP machine
4. Change the humidifier water and clean the humidifier and tubing, rinse with distilled water.
5. Nasal salt sprays four times per day.
6. If you have a cold you may wish to use an over the counter decongestant for a short period but most of these lose their effect when used for over a week.
7. If the stuffiness persists, you should consult your doctor.

4. Dry Mouth: Some patients will note a dry mouth when they awaken. This comes from having your mouth open at night. When your mouth is open the air being pushed in through your nose is coming out your mouth and not holding your throat open. So unfortunately, you are not getting the benefit of the CPAP and your getting a dry mouth.

Solution:

1. Call your home health company and request they send you a chin strap for your head gear.

2. Football teeth guards or protectors may also help. Get the type that you can mold to fit both your top and bottom teeth. **There should be no hole in the middle to breath through .**
3. Use the humidifier with your CPAP machine.
4. Tape (2 inch) across your lips try medical paper tape or transpore tape.

5. Skin Irritation:

You may notice rub marks from your mask or head gear. This may particularly occur on the bridge of your nose. This comes from the mask being tight or the head gear being tight. From some people requiring high CPAP pressures the tight head gear may be unavoidable. Sometimes skin is irritated because of the mask not being cleaned well or soap left on the mask.

- Solution:
1. Skin protectors or patches like those sold for tender areas on your feet may be placed on the head gear or mask to reduce the pressure on the irritated area.
 2. Make sure to use a skin moisturizer to keep the skin from cracking or peeling.
 3. Clean the mask and head gear regularly making sure that all of the soap is rinsed off thoroughly with distilled water.
 4. Foam spacers may provide some relief of pressure to the skin.
 5. Use a soft series mask or bubble mask.

6. Face Mask Leaking:

You may note leaking of air from around the mask, or difficulty getting a good seal around the mask. This happens when masks do not fit or the head gear does not hold the mask on tight.

- Solution:
1. Tighten or loosen head gear to get a good seal with the mask.
 2. Make sure your masks fit properly and is comfortable. If not ask your home health company to refit you with another mask.
 3. Once you find a comfortable position for you mask that provides a good seal mark your strap position with colored thread. This will remind you how tight your straps need to go to get a good seal. These may change over time.

7. Tube Pulling on the Mask:

The tubes from the CPAP machine to the mask can pull the mask and break the seal when you move from side to side. Some people also find they can not get comfortable with the tubes on the bed.

- Solution:
1. Buy an extension arm light that swivels at the base and can be clamped or attached to the head of your bed. You should take the light off of the extension arm, attach the extension arm to the head of your bed over your pillow so that it can rotate from the left to right side of your bed. Attach one end of a flexible stretch cord to the end of the extension arm and the other end of the cord around the CPAP tubing. Be sure to have enough slack to allow you free motion from side to side without having the tubing resting on the bed.

