

CONTINUOUS POSITIVE AIRWAY PRESSURE (CPAP)

If you have any other problems with the CPAP machines, or you would like more information please do not hesitate to contact

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Nasal CPAP

When you start using nasal CPAP for the first time a few minor technical problems may be encountered.

Nasal Blockage

In the first few weeks of using nasal CPAP you may experience nasal fullness – like having a flu. At times there may be a watery discharge in the morning after using the machine. These problems are related to the flow of air through your nose. If you experience such a problem you should increase the humidification setting (see last page in this brochure) until you are comfortable. If there is too much condensation in the mask, then the setting needs to be decreased. Another measure is the use of a nasal de-congestant (for a few days only).

Nasal CPAP and Asthma

People who do have sleep apnoea and asthma may get it better controlled whilst on the CPAP machine. Sometimes asthma is better controlled whilst on the CPAP machine.

Pressure sore due to nasal mask

The strap which keeps the nasal mask in place needs to be adjusted evenly so that pressure is distributed around the mask edges. When you first use the nasal CPAP it is possible that small sore spots may develop particularly on the bridge of the nose. If this happens you should discontinue the use of the machine for a few days and be reviewed by your doctor. In the majority of cases adjustment of the strap and the forehead rest is sufficient to improve the application of the mask. Avoid pulling the straps too tight. The sealing of the nasal mask or nasal prongs should be by proper size and by the thin silicon rim.

Eye Irritation

It is not uncommon for some air to escape on the side of the mask when you use the machine, especially when you change positions. This can result in irritation of the eyes. This can be avoided by readjusting the position of the head strap to make sure that there is an even seal around the mask.

Nasal CPAP and Heartburn / Oesophageal Reflux

In our experience symptoms of reflux tend to improve whilst the patient is on nasal CPAP. On occasion you may find yourself in the morning with the nasal mask removed. This can happen through the night and you should persevere with the use of the machine as this problem will improve as time passes by. When you start using nasal CPAP for the first time it is acceptable to use nasal CPAP for a few hours each night and increase the length of time over a period of a few weeks.

Use of a chin strap

The use of a chin strap is widely advocated, but in our experience it is only useful in people with neuromuscular disorders. The idea behind a chin strap is to prevent the air escaping from the mouth. Reducing the pressure inside the airway causes nasal CPAP to be less effective. However, unless there is muscle weakness for other reasons, **it does not warrant the use of chin strap.**

Humidification

Humidification warms and also adds moisture to the air that is being delivered by the machine. This helps to reduce dryness of the nose and back of the throat and to reduce nasal stuffiness. Most modern CPAP machines have the option of humidification. This allows the air to come out warm and saturated with water reducing the dryness of the nose and back of the throat and reducing nasal stuffiness. The potential drawback is the development of condensation in the tubing. When this reaches an amount of more than 5 –6 cm of water, it interferes with the pressure delivered by the machine (it reduces it) and the humidification setting needs to be decreased.

Full face mask

A full face mask is sometimes used, but is more intrusive than the nasal mask or nasal prongs. If you change from a nasal mask or prongs to a full face mask the CPAP pressure may require increasing slightly to compensate for the extra volume.