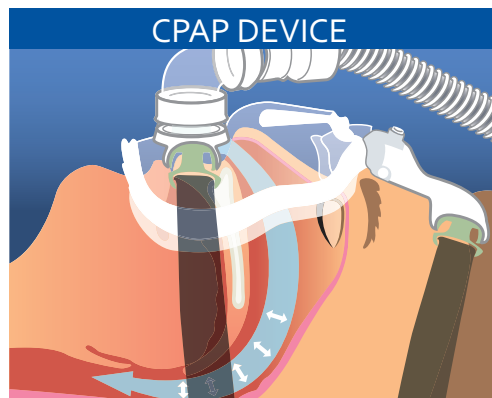


PAP Therapy—Quick Tips for Troubleshooting to Address Problems with Use

Positive airway pressure therapy (PAP) is used to treat obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). A machine is used with a mask to blow air into the air passages. This helps keep the person's air passages from collapsing, allowing him or her to breathe better during sleep. This pressurized air is delivered through a tube to a mask that fits over the person's nose or nose and mouth or nasal pillows (prongs) that fit into a person's nostrils.



PAP therapy is a very effective way to treat OSA, but people sometimes can have problems with the machine and/or mask/nasal pillows. It is important to promptly address any problems that prevent you from using PAP therapy. The purpose of this fact sheet is to offer quick tips to troubleshoot some common problems related to PAP therapy. For more information on OSA and PAP therapy go to the ATS patient information series at www.thoracic.org/patients. For specific tips and action steps, see page 2.

With time, patience, and practice, using your PAP machine will become easier. Do not hesitate to contact your healthcare provider if there are troublesome issues that prevent you from using your PAP machine successfully.

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Resources:

Sleep Education—American Academy of Sleep Medicine

- <http://sleepeducation.org/essentials-in-sleep/cpap>

National Sleep Foundation

- <https://sleepfoundation.org/ask-the-expert/cpap-101-expert-tips-getting-started-continuous-positive-airway-pressure-cpap>

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

- <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/cpap>

U.S. National Library of Medicine

- <https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001916.htm>

American Thoracic Society

- <https://www.thoracic.org/patients/patient-resources/resources/cpap-for-osa.pdf>

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Rx *Tips & Action Steps*

Problem	Solutions
I don't know how to put on my mask	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Turn your PAP machine on, before placing the mask on your face 2. When the mask makes a good seal with your face, you will no longer hear air blowing out of the mask 3. Adjust the straps (make sure they are not too loose and not too tight)
My mask leaks at night	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Readjust your mask (as above) 2. If possible, lay the PAP tubing on your chest and cover it with a blanket (so the tubing does not pull on the mask and cause leaks) 3. Use a commercially available CPAP tubing holder 4. Use a specialized sleeping pillow (with cut-outs or indentations) designed for PAP users 5. Consider being fitted for an alternative mask or nasal pillows 6. Raising the head of your bed may help prevent leak
Water collects in my PAP tubing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decrease the heat setting on the attached heated humidifier 2. Increase the temperature of your bedroom 3. Insulate the tubing by using a fleece cover or laying the tubing on top of your chest and covering it with a blanket 4. Use heated PAP tubing (if your PAP machine has this option)
I have stomach pain or excessive gas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Change your sleeping position and/or the number of pillows that you sleep on 2. Use the patient controlled setting on your PAP to reduce air pressure slightly when you breathe out (if your PAP machine has this option) 3. Talk to your healthcare provider to see if switching to an auto-PAP or bi-level PAP machine is right for you or switching to nasal pillows or mask from face mask
I have difficulty falling asleep with my PAP	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep trying – the more you use your PAP machine, the easier it becomes 2. Practice good sleep habits 3. Try wearing your PAP during the day while reading or watching television to get used to it 4. Talk to your sleep doctor if your PAP setting can be changed (discuss ramp or autoramp)
My PAP pressure feels too high	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You may get used to the pressure over time 2. Use the "ramp" function on the PAP machine to start the PAP machine at a lower pressure. The pressure will increase over time while you fall asleep 3. Use the patient controlled setting on your PAP to reduce air pressure slightly when you breathe out 4. Talk to your healthcare provider to see if an auto-PAP or bi-level PAP machine is right for you
I have nose and/or mouth dryness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the heat setting on your humidifier 2. Add a chin strap if you are using a nasal mask or nasal pillows 3. Consider changing to a full face mask 4. Use saline spray or gel for your nasal passages 5. Artificial saliva gel, spray, or mouthwash can be helpful for mouth dryness 6. Use heated PAP tubing (if your PAP machine has this option)
My nose is stuffy or runny	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the heat setting on your humidifier 2. Use heated PAP tubing (if your PAP machine has this option) 3. Talk to your healthcare provider about whether a prescription nasal spray is right for you