
Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP)

Your healthcare provider has prescribed CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) therapy for you. A CPAP device helps you breathe better at night. The device sends air flow through your nose or mouth when you breathe in. This keeps your air passages open. CPAP is:

- Used most often to treat sleep apnea and some other problems. Sleep apnea is a long-term (chronic) condition. You have periods of sleep where you briefly stop breathing.
- Safe and works well. But it takes time to get used to the mask.

Your healthcare provider, nurse, or medical supplier will give you tips for wearing and caring for your CPAP device.

General guidelines

Advice includes:

- It's very important not to give up! It takes time to get used to wearing the mask at night.
- Practice using your CPAP device during the day. Do this whenever you take a nap.
- There are different types of masks. If you can't get used to your mask, ask your provider or medical supply company about trying another style.
- Talk with your provider or medical supply company if you have nasal stuffiness or dryness when using your CPAP device, . There are ways to ease these problems. For example, your provider may advise using a nasal spray. Or the medical supply company may advise a device with a humidifier.
- The goal is to use your CPAP all night, every night, and during all naps. Use it even when you travel.
- Keep your mask clean. Wash it with soap and water. Be sure to rinse the mask and tubing well with water to remove any soap. Let them air-dry fully before using.
- Make yourself comfortable when sleeping with CPAP. Try using extra pillows.

Work with your medical supply company so that you know how to correctly use your CPAP. The company's staff will be able to help you:

- Use the CPAP correctly
- Troubleshoot any problems that come up
- Learn to clean and maintain the device
- Get used to using the CPAP daily

The CPAP device settings are given as centimeters of water (cm/H₂O). Each person's pressure settings are different. Your healthcare provider will tell you what settings to use. Never change your CPAP pressure setting unless your provider tells you to.

CPAP _____cm/H₂O pressure when you breathe in