

## What Are the Benefits of CPAP?

Using CPAP **everyday** may help prevent serious **health consequences** of OSA:



- ✓ Reduce risk of **heart disease** or **heart attack** by lowering blood pressure<sup>4</sup>



- ✓ Similarly, reduce risk of **stroke** (blockage of a blood vessel going to the brain)<sup>5</sup>



- ✓ Reduce blood sugar swings in **type 2 diabetes**<sup>3</sup>



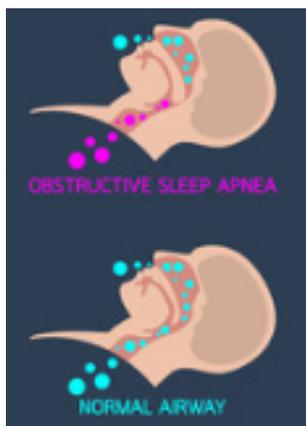
- ✓ Reduce chances of **motor vehicle accidents** (by reducing **daytime sleepiness** & loss of **concentration**)<sup>6</sup>



- ✓ Reduce risk of **depression**, enhance **emotional stability**, **mood** and overall **quality of life**<sup>7</sup>



- ✓ Eliminate **snoring**



## What Can I do if I am Having Difficulty using CPAP?<sup>1</sup>

- ✓ Start using your CPAP for **short periods of time**, during daytime (e.g. when watching TV or when reading).
- ✓ **Adjust** mask straps or headgear to your best comfort when lying down: if straps are too tight, may lead to skin irritation or sores.
- ✓ If your CPAP machine has **“ramp” mode**, consider using it so that it starts at a lower pressure setting and gradually increases: this can help you fall asleep easier before air pressure reaches adequate levels.
- ✓ Use a **saline nasal spray** if experiencing nasal congestion when using CPAP.
- ✓ Increase humidity by using **humidifier** if experiencing dry mouth, throat or nose to make breathing easier.
- ✓ Integrate CPAP into your **daily bedtime routine** as part of **good sleep hygiene**.
- ✓ **Clean** your CPAP mask and tubing at least once per week (refer to owner’s manual).
- ✓ Tell someone you trust to **hold you accountable** for using your CPAP or join a **support group** online if you are having difficulties using CPAP every night.
- ✓ If the above adjustments are not working, please **consult your sleep doctor** to discuss different CPAP mask or machine options, or air pressure adjustments, or even to help identify and overcome certain thoughts, fears or concerns about using CPAP.
- ✓ Remember to **be patient with yourself** as it is normal to take some time before getting comfortable using CPAP. This adjustment phase may last for a few weeks or months. **The key is to not give up.**

## Are there any Side Effects of CPAP?<sup>1</sup>

- **Strap marks or skin sores:** Can be caused by **poor mask fitting**. **Loosening the straps** and investing in **softer CPAP straps** to reduce straps from rubbing on skin can be helpful.  
*Commercial product:* “Pad-a-cheek” offers soft padding for sleep apnea masks.
- **Dry nose & sore throat:** A **humidifier** and **warmed tubing** can help reduce dry nose or sore throat by providing moisturized air in the room.
- **Nasal congestion:** First increase humidity. Try using a **saline nasal spray** or over-the-counter nasal **decongestants**. Finally, prescription topical steroids and/or antihistamines can be used.



## What Types of Masks are Available?<sup>1</sup>

- **Nasal mask:** covers only your nose and is the most common type of CPAP mask.
- **Full face mask:** covers both nose & mouth and can help reduce air leaks into eyes.
- **Nasal pillows:** have silicone tubes that fit directly in your nose & can help reduce air leaks: particularly useful if you do not like the feeling of a mask over your face.
- **Hybrid:** has both nasal pillows and mouth cushions, without chinstraps, & has fewer points of contact on your face.  
*Commercial Site:* cpap.com shows all available masks, machines & supplies.

## What is CPAP?

- CPAP is short for **C**ontinuous **P**ositive **A**irway **P**ressure and helps treat **obstructive sleep apnea (OSA)**<sup>1</sup>
- It delivers a **constant flow of air** through its tubes and mask into your airway<sup>2</sup>
- It **keeps your airway open & prevents interruptions in breathing** during sleep<sup>2</sup>
- CPAP therapy helps **avoid decreased oxygen in the blood**, a common phenomenon in OSA<sup>1</sup>
- CPAP therapy comes with a **machine** (small, lightweight), **flexible tubing** (long enough to allow you to turn over in bed), and **mask** (a variety of masks are available)
- Ensuring a **proper fit** of your CPAP mask to **prevent air leaks** and using one that caters to your **best comfort** is important.
- If you stop using CPAP therapy, sleep apnea symptoms may return. Thus, using CPAP **always** when going to sleep, even during naps, is important to accrue **health benefits**.



## What is CPAP?



### References

- [1] <http://sleepeducation.org/essentials-in-sleep/cpap>
- [2] <https://www.lung.ca/lung-health/lung-disease/sleep-apnea/cpap>.
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- [5] T.D. Bradley, J.S. Floras, Obstructive sleep apnoea and its cardiovascular consequences, *Lancet* 373 (2009) 82–93.
- [6] George, C. (2001). Reduction in motor vehicle collisions following treatment of sleep apnoea with nasal CPAP. *Thorax*, 56(7), 508-50812.
- [7] Effects of CPAP on Anxiety, Depression and Major Cardiac and Cerebrovascular Events in Obstructive Sleep Apnea Patients with and without CAD (2017). *Respirology*, 22(S3), 149.