What to Expect from Your Care Team

Your CPAP care team typically includes your physician and your durable medical equipment (DME) provider. Ideally, they will:

- ✓ Help you understand your CPAP prescription and why CPAP is important for your health
- ✓ Educate you on how to use and maintain your equipment, including troubleshooting
- ✓ Focus on your individual needs and prioritize your comfort
- ✓ Check in regularly to make sure you are doing well with therapy
- ✓ Answer questions or concerns you have, and provide additional resources to help you

Being your own advocate is the best way to get good care. If you are not getting the right support from your care team, seek providers who can better meet your needs.

Looking for More Support?

WSCN has online resources to help you on your journey.

FAQs

Visit our FAQ section on our AWAKE Peer Mentorship page for answers to common questions.

AWAKE Peer Mentor Program:

Our free peer mentorship program connects you with experienced mentors who can support you on your journey, so you don't have to do it alone.

Desensitization protocols:

have a simple, downloadable, step-by-step protocol to help you get used to wearing a CPAP mask.

We offer additional learning materials, information, and resources on our website.

Scan the QR code to visit our website, learn more, and sign up for help.

WSCN
Wellness, Sleep & Circadian Network

Getting Started with CPAP Therapy

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE

Beginning CPAP therapy is a big step, and it's completely natural to feel uncertain at first. Trust that every night you use your CPAP is a night closer to better sleep, renewed energy, and better health.

WSCN has prepared this simple guide to help new CPAP users like you have a better and more successful experience.

sleephealth.org
888-293-3650

Getting Used to CPAP Therapy

Most new CPAP users find that it takes time to adjust to sleeping with CPAP. There are many options to help customize therapy to meet your specific needs. Here are some things to consider.

TAKE TIME TO ADJUST TO PAP THERAPY

It can help to practice wearing your mask during waking hours before starting nighttime use. Try putting on your mask, turning on the machine, and relaxing with a book or some TV. Explore the available comfort features to help you adapt. A mask desensitization protocol can also help.

ASK ABOUT COMFORT FEATURES

Most PAP therapy devices have built-in comfort features. Ask your care team about the following:

- **Ramp:** starts on a low pressure when you first put on the mask and gradually ramps up to therapy pressure as you fall asleep
- **Humidifier attachments:** help reduce side effects like nasal congestion and dryness. Some devices have heated humidification, which prevents water from collecting in the tube
- **Pressure relief:** reduces pressure during exhalation for improved comfort without compromising therapy effectiveness

PICK THE RIGHT MASK (YOU'LL WEAR IT EVERY NIGHT)

There are a wide variety of mask styles available. Ask your DME to show you their range of options and try several masks before you make a decision. Before you leave, ensure your mask is properly fitted and learn to adjust it on your own.

CLEAN YOUR EQUIPMENT REGULARLY

Taking good care of your equipment can prolong its lifespan and prevent side effects, like skin irritation. Here are some cleaning tips:

- **Mask:** Clean your mask every day to prevent bacteria buildup and skin irritation. Wipe the cushion and frame with a damp cloth to remove particles. Let it air dry or use a soft cloth.
- **Tube:** To clean your tube, use a 1:9 vinegar-water solution or mild soap, rinse thoroughly, and then hang it to dry.
- **PAP Device:** Using a damp cloth, wipe the machine's ports and exterior to remove any dust particles or other debris.
- **Water Chamber:** Rinse your water chamber with a 1:9 vinegar-water solution and wipe any buildup. Use distilled water for best results. Complete this routine before each chamber fill.
- **Facial hygiene:** Wash your face before bed, and avoid heavy creams/products that can lead to skin irritation.

What Is Normal

(AND WHAT IS NOT)

Learning about how to make PAP therapy work for you is part of the journey.

HERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

Feeling frustrated is normal. With practice, a correct mask fit, patience, and support, you can be successful with your therapy.

Removing the mask in the middle of the night is common in the early stages. Don't be discouraged. Simply put it back on and try again

It may take some trial and error to find the mask that is best for you. Ask your DME about options and try a few different models.

If the pressure feels like it is not working, contact your physician/sleep doctor. It's normal to need machine adjustments in the beginning.

You should start feeling better and more energized after commencing therapy. You may notice differences in your daily quality of life.

If you are not noticing improvements after two weeks and you've tried simple troubleshooting, return to your physician/sleep doctor for help.

sleephealth.org