

Top 10 Problems & Solutions

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1. MASK LEAKS

Leaks may be caused by being:

- Too loose
- Too large
- Too small
- Wrong type of mask

2. MOUTH OPENING

This problem stems from the collapse of the nasal pharynx. Increasing CPAP pressure corrects this. If it persists:

- A chin strap will not help
- Contact the Sleep Disorders Center for a physician's order to increase CPAP pressure. Be sure to say why you are requesting the pressure increase.
- Full face mask should only be used as a last resort.
- The risk of using the full face mask should be clearly explained – namely, the potential for aspiration of regurgitated material into the lungs.

3. CLAUSTROPHOBIA

- Apnea may be part of the cause.
- CPAP will help to relieve this symptom.
- The key is to relax. Let this fact sink in -- "I can breathe now".

4. NASAL DRYNESS, BURNING AND BLEEDING

- Add humidity in line.
- Heated humidity is more effective.



5. MASK UNATTRACTIVE TO SPOUSE

The sleep partner is happier with a breathing partner than with a partner who cannot catch his/her breath. Studies have shown that the bed partner gets an extra hour of sleep per night with CPAP use.

6. REPEATED SNEEZING

- Soaps used to clean the system may be the problem as they contain allergens. Clean the mask and tubing with a vinegar and water solution.
- Make sure tubing is dry. After washing, shake out excess water, connect to machine and allow pressure to run for 10 minutes.

7. STILL SNORING

This can be a sign that the CPAP pressure needs to be increased. Contact the Sleep Disorders Center for a physician order. Remember to explain why you are requesting a pressure increase.

8. CAN NOT GET AIR OUT

When first trying CPAP, people think that they have to actively force the air out.

- The key is to relax. Remember that expiration is passive. It will happen without your control.

9. TOO MUCH PRESSURE

The prescribed pressure is the amount that was necessary to keep the throat open during the sleep study. Try this:

- Put headgear on and adjust mask to comfortable tension.
- Turn on machine.
- Inhale deeply through the nose.
- Attach hose to mask.
- Relax and breathe the pressure for 5 – 10 minutes.

10. RED SPOT ON BRIDGE OF NOSE

- Mask may be too tight.
- Loosen straps.
- May need to try different style mask, e.g. a direct flow method.