



CPAP/Bi-Level Tips and Troubleshooting



Breathe Easier.

- When you are using CPAP or bi-level ventilation for the first time, you will notice an unusual sense of pressure when breathing. You will need to consciously push out when you breathe out. This is normal, and will happen automatically when you are asleep. At first, you may feel as if the pressure is making it difficult to breathe out, but this is not the case. In time, you will adapt to the sensation. Taking a few deep breaths when you first turn the pressure on may help you adjust to the new sensation better.
- While wearing the mask, keep your mouth closed and do not attempt to talk. If you open your mouth, air will leak out and this may feel slightly unpleasant. When you are asleep, your mouth usually stays closed. However, when you wake up and open your mouth, the sensation of air rushing from your mouth might alarm you at first. It is best to close your mouth and try to go back to sleep. If you have trouble keeping your mouth closed at night while you are sleeping, you can use a chinstrap to help keep it closed if your physician approves. Ask your therapist about a chinstrap if you are having trouble with this.
- The delay timer can also be useful in helping to overcome these potential problems. The pressure will build up more gradually from a more comfortable level to the prescribed level over a period of time.
- Some people experience a dryness of the mouth and nose when using CPAP or bi-level therapy, particularly during the winter months. A humidifier can be added to your system to help with this problem. If you are having this problem, talk to the therapist who is taking care of you so that they can obtain an order from your physician for a humidifier.
- Wash your face to remove excess facial oils prior to fitting the mask. This will help prolong the life of the cushion and also help the mask to stay in place better.
- The mask should not fit too tightly. The fit should be tightened only to the point where an air leak around the mask is prevented. Pulling the headgear straps too tight can cause skin irritation at the bridge of the nose, or above the lip. It is best to fit the final tension on the straps while lying down in your normal sleeping position. A minor leak is preferable to over-tightening the mask. However, you should eliminate any air leaks that cause blowing in the direction of your eyes in order to avoid eye irritation.
- If the air feels too cool and causes your nose to be uncomfortably cold, you may want to reposition the tubing to run under your bed covers to reduce heat loss.
- If you experience sinus troubles, a runny nose, or suspect you may have an upper respiratory infection, you should consult with your physician. He or she may want to alter your therapy for a period of time, or prescribe other remedies to help with these problems.



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