

Frequently asked questions about CPAP and other breathing devices

About your PAP mask

What's the correct way to fit my mask?

Facial muscles change once we fall asleep. It is always best to fit your mask while you're in your sleeping position. It's important never to over-tighten your mask. To double check you have a good seal, "Run Mask Fit" in your "My Options" menu. Adjust your mask until you get a "Good" result.

My sleep report showed a red frowny face. What does this mean?

When you receive a frowny, red face on your sleep report, it means you had too high of a leak from your usage. Try adjusting your mask or running a mask fit before you use it next. If the problem persists, consider an alternate mask style or changing your cushion.

I feel air coming from the front of my mask. Is this normal?

Each mask has an exhalation port. There is a constant flow of air that will come from this area. This ensures you receive fresh air with each breath that you take.

What if I don't like my mask?

Each mask has a 30 day warranty. If you are struggling with your mask, let us know. We can always explore other mask choices that may be a better fit for you.

What mask types are available to me?

There are a variety of mask models, shapes and materials to address your individual needs. Finding the right mask for you is essential.



Full face mask

Covers your nose and mouth

Allows you to mouth breathe



Nasal mask

Only covers your nose

Ideal if you nose breathe only



Under the nose mask

Eliminates contact with the bridge of your nose.



Nasal pillow

Seals around each nostril

Minimal contact

(continued on back)



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Learn more at iuhealth.org/CPAP.

Troubleshooting and common issues

I'm having trouble getting used to wearing a PAP device. What should I do?

Using a PAP device can be frustrating, but it's important to stick with it. The treatment is essential to avoiding complications of obstructive sleep apnea, such as heart problems and excessive daytime sleepiness. Desensitize yourself by wearing it for short periods of time when you're awake (while watching TV, reading, etc.). Just wearing the device in this fashion will help reduce the anxiety of the treatment.

Back pressure and forced air from the device is causing me issues. Is this normal?

This may be overcome by adjusting the ramp feature. In patients who have APAP devices, body positioning can play a large role in reducing working pressures, because positional obstructions occur mainly when a patient repositions to their back which creates the need for higher treatment pressures. In these instances the use of a pillow as a wedge can keep patients off their back therefore preventing higher treatment pressures and creating more comfort.

I'm having nose and mouth dryness – is there anything I can do?

You can adjust the humidity level manually or place the device in an auto adjustable setting. The humidity levels received can also be affected by large leaks in your mask. Make sure you have a good seal prior to laying down at night. A chin strap may help especially with nasal devices if only oral dryness is the problem. Using nasal saline spray at bedtime can also help ease a dry, stuffy nose.

What should I do if I'm having difficulty falling asleep?

Following good general sleep habits are helpful. Exercise regularly and avoid caffeine and alcohol before bedtime. Try to relax. For example, take a warm bath before you go to bed. Don't go to bed until you're tired.

How can I avoid unintentionally removing the mask?

It is common to sometimes wake up to find the mask has been removed during sleep. Pulling off the mask could be related to nasal congestion. If so, ensuring a good mask fit and reviewing the heated humidifier setting may help. Being aware of body positioning and how it affects increasing delivery pressures in PAP devices often leads to unknowingly removing the mask due to difficulty exhaling.

Insurance and billing

What do I have to do for my insurance to pay for the device?

In general, PAP compliance is defined as at least 4 hours per night, 70% of the nights for insurance companies to pay for the device. Inability to meet that compliance threshold, or it simply is not helping you, would require the machine be returned or the election of a pay out of pocket option.

If you have further questions, please contact the IU Health Sleep Apnea Education Center.

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