

**CARE**

**MEDICAL &  
REHABILITATION  
EQUIPMENT**

# **SLEEP THERAPY GUIDE**



What to expect from your Care Medical Respiratory Team, insurance guidelines and how to successfully use your equipment to alleviate your sleep apnea symptoms.



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*"Partners In Care"*

## INTRODUCTION

Doctors estimate that as many as 12 million Americans suffer from sleep apnea. While there is no cure for sleep apnea, there are treatment options available, the most common of which is CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) therapy.

Care Medical & Rehabilitation Equipment offers the latest innovations in sleep therapy equipment and supplies. Our licensed Respiratory Therapists, Respiratory Care Consultants and Respiratory Customer Service staff place patient care as their number one priority and are committed to helping their patients succeed with their sleep therapy.

As your “Partner In Care”, Care Medical & Rehabilitation Equipment believes that patients newly diagnosed with sleep apnea should understand what to expect as they begin their sleep therapy.

This guide is designed to help explain the use of CPAP therapy as a treatment for sleep apnea, what to expect from your Care Medical Respiratory Team, insurance guidelines regarding CPAP compliance, and how to successfully and safely use your equipment to alleviate your sleep apnea symptoms.



## WHAT IS SLEEP APNEA?

**Sleep Apnea** is a serious sleep disorder where breathing repeatedly stops (often for a minute or longer) and starts during sleep, sometimes hundreds of times. OSA, or **obstructive sleep apnea**, is caused when your airway collapses and closes during sleep. Sleep apnea is very common, and often goes undiagnosed.

People who suffer from sleep apnea often complain of being very sleepy during the day, and may also experience morning headaches, memory problems, mood swings, feelings of depression, frequent urination, and gastric reflux.

Most people don't know they have sleep apnea. They do not realize they are having problems breathing while asleep. Sleep partners often notice the signs of sleep apnea first by reporting loud snoring or gasping for air. If left untreated, sleep apnea causes many health complications.



## SLEEP APNEA RISK FACTORS

Sleep apnea may occur if you're male or female, young or old - even children can have sleep apnea; however, certain factors increase the risk of sleep apnea. The following factors may increase your risk of developing sleep apnea:

### **Family History**

If you have family members with sleep apnea, you may be at increased risk.

### **Being Older**

Sleep apnea occurs two to three times more often in adults older than 65.

# SLEEP APNEA RISK FACTORS

## **Being Male**

Men are twice as likely to have sleep apnea as women are; however, the risk for women increases if they are overweight and/or past menopause.

## **Narrowed Airway**

You may inherit a naturally narrow throat or your tonsils or adenoids may become enlarged, which can block your airway.

## **Excess Weight**

Fat deposits around your upper airway may obstruct your breathing. However, not everyone who has sleep apnea is overweight as thin people develop the disorder too.

## **High Blood Pressure (Hypertension)**

Sleep apnea is common in patients with hypertension.

## **Neck Circumference**

A thick neck may narrow the airway. A neck circumference greater than 17 inches for males and 16 inches for females is associated with an increased risk of sleep apnea.

## **Nasal Congestion/Blockages/Irritants**

Household dust and dander can inhibit breathing through the nose and force breathing through the throat, which may also be blocked.

## **Irregular Sleep Hours**

An irregular sleep schedule can throw off your sleep cycles. Disruptions may include work days vs. non-work days; a snoring bed partner; aggravation from the day's events; and overuse of caffeinated products.

Particularly affected are Stage 1 sleep (when you first fall asleep) and REM sleep (when you dream). The result of disruption can be unstable breathing and sleep apnea during these phases of sleep.

## SLEEP APNEA RISK FACTORS

### Use of Alcohol, Sedatives or Tranquilizers

Use of these substances relax the muscles in your throat making it more difficult to breathe.

### Smoking

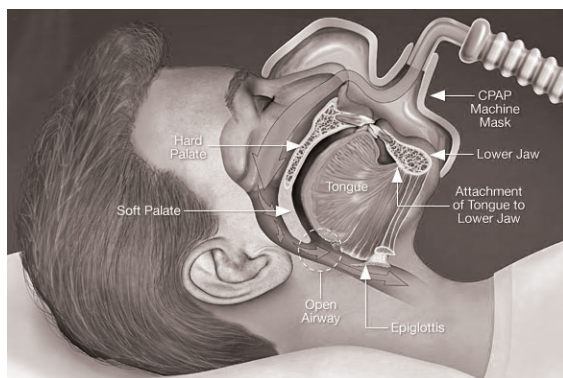
Smokers are much more likely to have obstructive sleep apnea as smoking may increase the amount of inflammation and fluid retention in the upper airway. This risk drops after smoking cessation.

## HOW TO TREAT SLEEP APNEA

The most common treatment for sleep apnea is the use of a machine called a CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure).

This machine delivers air pressure through a mask placed over your nose and/or mouth while you sleep. Alternate treatments include auto adjusting units or Bi-Level devices.

A CPAP mask is held in place by a head strap; tubing goes from the mask to the CPAP unit. The CPAP unit is plugged into the electrical outlet and provides a constant flow of air through the tubing to the mask. The mask blows air into your throat at a pressure level that is right for you. The increased airway pressure keeps the throat open while you sleep and is set so that it is just enough to stop the airways from briefly narrowing or closing during sleep, helping to prevent apnea and snoring.



## HOW TO TREAT SLEEP APNEA

Your doctor prescribed this equipment for you to alleviate symptoms associated with sleep apnea. Remember that CPAP therapy is a *treatment* and not a *cure*. Therefore, your body is only benefiting from it when you are actually using it.

Your Care Medical Respiratory Team is here to help you be successful with your CPAP therapy and is available to answer any questions you may have, as well as troubleshoot problems to aid in adjusting to your sleep therapy equipment.

## BENEFITS OF CPAP THERAPY

CPAP improves the levels of oxygen to your entire body which provides for better overall health. For many people, the positive results of using CPAP are quick and dramatic. Their initial night of using CPAP may feel like the first good night of sleep they have had in years. Others may not notice improvements right away. It may take time for them to adjust to this new way of sleeping.

### THE BRAIN

- Your brain needs a good supply of oxygen for it to work properly. When you improve the oxygen to your brain you may notice better concentration ability and memory.
- When you have proper sleep you can expect greater alertness and less daytime fatigue. Restoration of normal sleep can also help people with insomnia and all sleep apnea symptoms.
- Patients on CPAP report that it is easier for them to get up in the morning and report fewer morning headaches.
- Patients with depression may feel less anxiety and in a better overall mood. When ones mood and concentration improve they find they can be more productive at work and in other aspects of their life.

# BENEFITS OF CPAP THERAPY

## THE BODY

- Your body needs oxygen to get to the muscles and tissues. If you improve blood oxygen to your body this may help with the muscle and tissue healing process.
- CPAP may also be beneficial for patients who have diabetes. Sleep apnea is related to glucose intolerance and insulin resistance. Treatment with CPAP may improve insulin sensitivity in people with type 2 diabetes and sleep apnea. This can help reduce the risk of complications from diabetes, such as heart and kidney disease.
- Fibromyalgia, symptoms of pain and tenderness, seem to be linked to a lack of deep "stage 4" sleep. When people get better quality sleep, pain symptoms and fatigue have been shown to improve.
- Recent research has also shown that sleep apnea greatly increases your risk of stroke. Stroke is one of the leading causes of death and long-term disability in the United States.

Studies show that people with sleep apnea are two to four times more likely to have a stroke than people who do not have sleep apnea. The consistent use of CPAP can reduce this risk of stroke for a person with sleep apnea.

## THE HEART

- Your heart also needs a good supply of oxygen for it to work properly. If you are not getting enough oxygen while you sleep it can put stress on your heart. This may result in irregular heart beats, hypertension or high blood pressure.
- High blood pressure can put you at risk for stroke, myocardial ischemia and heart attack.

## BENEFITS OF CPAP THERAPY

- Many of the risks involved with sleep apnea are related to how your heart functions. A person with an extreme case of sleep apnea can stop breathing hundreds of times in one night. The pauses in breathing cause drastic changes in your oxygen levels. This puts an enormous strain on your heart and can lead to an increase in your heart rate.
- Research shows that people with sleep apnea have a higher rate of death due to heart disease. The link is strongest between sleep apnea and high blood pressure. Studies also show that CPAP may reduce these high blood pressure levels in people with sleep apnea. The use of CPAP, over an extended period of time, may reduce some heart problems. These problems include the following:
  - Congestive heart failure
  - Coronary artery disease
  - Irregular heartbeat

## YOUR SLEEP THERAPY EQUIPMENT

As you begin your sleep therapy, there are several steps you must take and requirements that must be met in order for your insurance to pay for the rental cost of your sleep therapy equipment and supplies.

This section explains the four steps you must take to obtain your sleep therapy equipment as well as the requirements that must be met for your insurance to consider you “compliant” with your sleep therapy and thus continue to pay for your equipment.

- ✓ STEP 1: THE FACE-TO-FACE EXAMINATION
- ✓ STEP 2: SLEEP STUDY RESULTS
- ✓ STEP 3: THE FIRST THREE MONTHS
- ✓ STEP 4: CONTINUED COVERAGE



## STEP 1: THE FACE-TO-FACE EXAMINATION

Sleep apnea is a serious medical condition, and if left untreated can lead to serious health issues including high blood pressure and other heart conditions, memory problems, weight gain, impotency, and headaches. Due to fatigue, sleep apnea is often responsible for accidents on the road or job site.

Before meeting with your Care Medical Respiratory Team to get set up with your sleep therapy equipment you should have met with your doctor to discuss your sleep apnea symptoms.

During this visit your doctor may have asked you some questions about your excessive sleepiness, memory, snoring, daytime headaches, etc. as well as look at your airway to determine if you needed to be referred to a sleep specialist to schedule a sleep study.

## STEP 2: SLEEP STUDY RESULTS

If your doctor determined you were at risk for having sleep apnea and ordered a sleep test, it may have shown you have a diagnosis of *sleep apnea*, or *obstructive sleep apnea (OSA)*.

During your sleep study, you may have used a CPAP machine to determine what pressure was most effective. This information is important and was included in the prescription Care Medical & Rehabilitation Equipment received from your doctor.



## STEP 2: SLEEP STUDY RESULTS

Your insurance has requirements that must be met in order for them to pay for your sleep therapy equipment.

Once these requirements have been met, your insurance will pay their portion for the sleep therapy equipment and related supplies for *the first three months*.

This guide will help you understand what you need to do in order for your insurance to continue to pay for the rental cost of this equipment after the first three months.

## STEP 3: THE FIRST THREE MONTHS

Using your sleep therapy equipment isn't always easy, and we are here to help you adjust to the therapy. Your Care Medical Respiratory Team will assist you in selecting the appropriate mask/equipment as ordered by your doctor.

Once you have received instruction on the proper use, maintenance and cleaning procedures for your equipment and supplies, your Care Medical Respiratory Team will explain our follow-up policy.

If you are experiencing difficulty adjusting to your equipment, contact your Care Medical Respiratory Team immediately to resolve these issues.

A member of your Care Medical Respiratory Team will be contacting you within 5-7 days after you get your equipment to discuss how you are adjusting to your machine and mask. You will be contacted again after 30 days to schedule a data download of your equipment.

This information will be forwarded to both your physician and insurance to document your compliance with the equipment.



### STEP 3: THE FIRST THREE MONTHS

Your insurance will only continue to pay for your equipment if you are “compliant”. You are **compliant** if you are “**using your equipment at least 4 hours a night at least 70% of the nights during a consecutive 30 day period during the first three months of use**”.

Again, it is important that you contact your Care Medical Respiratory Team if you experience ongoing difficulties with your equipment. We will continue to work with you to help you be successful.

**Remember, your insurance will only continue to pay for your sleep therapy equipment after the first three months of use if you are using your equipment at least 4 hours a night at least 70% of the time.**

### STEP 4: CONTINUED COVERAGE

Your insurance has requirements that must be met for continued payment after the first three months. They want to make sure you are using your equipment and that it is benefiting you. Therefore, they require evidence of compliance documented in your medical records.

The first three months is considered your trial period. Your insurance will pay for your equipment rental during this time, giving you the chance to adjust to the machine and get relief of your symptoms.

In order for your insurance to pay for your equipment after the first three months, you must:

- **Have a second face-to-face re-evaluation with your doctor.**
- **Your doctor must have documentation in written form of your compliance with the equipment.**

## STEP 4: CONTINUED COVERAGE

### ■ SECOND FACE-TO-FACE CLINICAL RE-EVALUATION

The purpose of this visit is for your doctor to discuss how you are doing with your CPAP machine and to document and review improvement of your symptoms since starting the therapy. This face-to-face visit can happen any time after the 31st day, but **MUST** occur **before** the 91st day.

**If you do not have a face-to-face re-evaluation with your doctor before the 91st day, you will be held financially responsible to continue using your equipment.**

### ■ DOCUMENTATION OF COMPLIANCE

Your doctor must have written documentation of your compliance. The data download which must consist of 30 consecutive days of usage serves as this documentation and becomes part of your medical record. This must be completed before your trial period ends.

**It is important to remember that if you do not have a data download documenting compliance before the 91st day, you will be held financially responsible to continue using your sleep therapy equipment.**



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**How long will my trial period last?** Your insurance allows a trial period of three months. If you need longer time, your insurance will not pay and you will be held responsible for payment in order to continue using the sleep therapy equipment.

**How does my insurance define compliance?** Your insurance wants to see that you are using your machine at least 4 hours nightly at least 70% of the nights.

**When do I need to re-visit my doctor?** You will need to see your treating physician between the 31st and 91st day in order for your insurance to continue paying.

**Should I have my data download before I see my doctor again?** Yes. Your doctor needs to see that you are using your equipment and that it is benefiting you. This information will be faxed to your doctor from Care Medical Equipment and will be part of your medical records.

**What happens if CPAP isn't right for me during the first three months?** If you are not getting relief of your symptoms while using your CPAP during the first three month trial period, you may need another type of machine called a Bi-Level. Your Care Medical Respiratory Team will answer any questions you might have about using the Bi-Level machine.

Your insurance will pay for the rental of a Bi-Level machine; however, you will be required to have a second face-to-face visit with your physician to obtain a new order and to document that your attempt to use the CPAP was unsuccessful.

A second data download will be required to confirm compliance with the Bi-Level machine. The amount of time remaining to establish compliance with your Bi-Level machine will depend on when your equipment is switched out during the initial three month trial period.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**What happens if CPAP isn't right for me after the first three months?** If you switch to a Bi-Level machine *after* three months, you will be required to have a new initial face-to-face evaluation with your doctor to obtain a new order and to document that your attempt to use the CPAP was unsuccessful. This will start a new three month trial period.

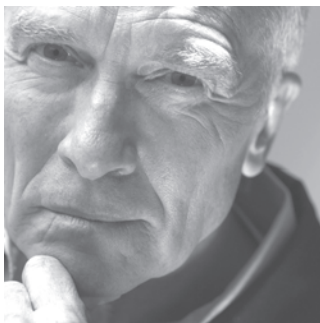
In addition, you will need a data download from the Bi-Level machine in the first 90 days confirming compliance and a *second* face-to-face visit with your doctor between the 31<sup>st</sup> day and 91<sup>st</sup> day.

**What happens if I don't want to keep my CPAP?** You can return your equipment anytime; however, if you want to start CPAP therapy at a later time, your insurance will require you to repeat a sleep test and have another face-to-face re-evaluation with your treating doctor before paying for the rental of the equipment.

**How often can I replace my supplies?** Most insurances will pay to replace your mask and headgear every 6 months, but you may replace them more frequently by paying privately. The tubing and filters may be replaced sooner if needed.

If you have any questions about when you are eligible for replacement supplies, please contact your Care Medical Respiratory Team.

**What happens if I change insurance?** If your insurance changes, check with your Care Medical Respiratory Team to see if your new insurance plan will still pay for these supplies.



## TIPS FOR CPAP THERAPY SUCCESS

Education and follow-up are very important to keeping up with your CPAP treatment. Problems such as mask fit, redness around the nose and dryness or nasal stuffiness can result in giving up on treatment.

If you are having any trouble, contact your Care Medical Respiratory Team and we will work with you to reduce these side effects.

- Begin using your CPAP for short periods of time during the day while you watch TV or read.
- Use CPAP every night and for naps. Using it less often reduces the health benefits and makes it harder for your body to get used to it.
- Make small adjustments to your mask, tubing, straps and headgear until you get the right fit.
- Use a saline nasal spray to ease mild nasal congestion. Take a nasal decongestant to relieve more severe nasal or sinus congestion.
- Use a heated humidifier that fits your CPAP model to enhance your breathing comfort.
- Try a system that uses nasal pillows if traditional masks are not fitting properly, causing irritation or other problems.
- Make sure to check with your doctor if you experience significant weight gain or loss as this may change the pressure needed to keep your throat open.
- Clean your mask daily, tubing and headgear once a week. Regularly check and replace the filters for your CPAP unit and humidifier.
- Work closely with your doctor and your Care Medical Respiratory Team to make sure that you have the machine, mask and air pressure setting that works best for you.

## **MAINTAINING & CLEANING YOUR CPAP**

It is very important that your CPAP therapy equipment be cleaned on a regular basis to reduce the risk of respiratory infections and/or skin irritations.

### **MASK/SEALS**

Your interface (mask/seals) should be washed every morning after use and allowed to air dry. Wash interface in warm soapy water using a washcloth. A mild, non-lotion, non-antibacterial dish soap or shampoo is recommended. Rinse under warm running water and air dry.

### **HEADGEAR**

Hand wash when soiled. Allow to air dry.

### **TUBING**

Your tubing should be washed regularly using a mild, non-lotion, non-antibacterial dish soap or shampoo. If you have a humidifier, tubing needs more frequent cleaning.

### **HUMIDIFIER**

The humidifier must be rinsed and water replaced daily. Refill the humidifier each night to the full line with fresh distilled water.

### **FILTERS**

Filter maintenance varies depending on the CPAP manufacturer and model. If your unit has a washable sponge filter, it should be washed with a mild, non-lotion, non-antibacterial dish soap or shampoo, then rinsed thoroughly under warm running water until the expressed water runs clear. Squeeze any excess water from the filter and pat with a paper towel or cloth. Allow filter to completely dry before placing it back into your CPAP unit.

Washable filters should be cleaned monthly at a minimum, but may need more frequent cleaning as indicated by the environment. If your unit has a disposable filter, discard and replace according to manufacturer recommendations.

## MAINTAINING & CLEANING YOUR CPAP

### DISINFECTING

Per manufacturer guidelines, or if you have sinus or respiratory illness, you can disinfect the humidifier chamber, mask seal and tubing by placing items in 1 part distilled vinegar to 4 parts water solution for 30 minutes. Rinse thoroughly under hot running water, then air dry.

### INSPECTING YOUR EQUIPMENT

Inspect mask, tubing and headgear regularly for signs of wear (tears, cracks, discoloration, hardening). Most insurance providers will cover replacement for accessories.

## USING YOUR EQUIPMENT SAFELY

**Never immerse the CPAP unit in water:** Never try to clean the CPAP unit by placing it in water. The electrical components will be damaged and this can create shock to the user the next time it is plugged into an electrical outlet.

**Never plug in the unit if it is wet or damp:** Moisture always increases the potential of electrical shock.

**Never plug your unit into an electrical outlet that is being used to supply power to another major appliance:** Do not plug your unit into an outlet being used to supply electricity to other major appliances. If you need to use the same outlet that is shared by other equipment, make sure the other appliances are NOT being used at the same time.

**Never use your unit with an extension cord or power strip.**

**Never try to repair your CPAP unit:** Do not try to repair the unit yourself. Your unit is medical equipment and needs to be worked on by a professional. If you have any issues with your CPAP unit, please contact your Care Medical Respiratory Team.

# CARE MEDICAL & REHABILITATION EQUIPMENT IS YOUR "PARTNER IN CARE"



Care Medical & Rehabilitation Equipment is a family-owned and operated company that has been providing quality home medical and respiratory equipment and services in Oregon and Washington since 1970.



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