

Sleep Centre

Your CPAP treatment: frequently asked questions

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

This leaflet answers the most frequently asked questions about CPAP. This can be useful if you have just been issued with a CPAP machine, or if you are a long-standing user, looking to self-manage and get the best out of your CPAP therapy.

What does CPAP do?

CPAP stands for continuous positive airway pressure. Your CPAP machine stops your airway narrowing or collapsing by increasing the pressure of the air you are breathing. This holds your throat open when needed, meaning you can breathe normally throughout the night and have undisturbed sleep.



When should I use CPAP?

You should use your CPAP every time you are sleeping, including planned naps. Too many nights without CPAP will mean your daytime symptoms return.

What can I expect from follow-up appointments?

At each follow-up we will download the data from your machine to check how much you have been using it and how it has been helping you. We will also replace parts, if necessary, and try to correct any problems you are having with treatment.

These appointments can be online or face-to-face. If face-to-face, you must bring all your equipment to each appointment so we can help you. If online, you must be near your equipment at all times.

What routine cleaning do I need to do?

- Clean the cushion once a day to prevent a build-up of naturally occurring oils from your skin. You can use warm water and mild soap such as washing up liquid.



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- Wash the entire mask and tubing once a week, also with warm water and mild soap.
 - Check your filter regularly for excessive dust build-up. This will last three to four months. New filters will be provided in clinic.
 - If using a humidifier, please clean it weekly to stop limescale build-up. You can do this with something naturally acidic, such as lemon juice or white vinegar.



What should I do if my mask is leaking?

At times you may notice air leaking from the mask cushion or that the pressure feels unusually high overnight. To fix this:

- ensure the mask cushion is clean, following the instructions on page one
- when adjusting the straps, make sure to run a mask fit check. This will have been explained during your CPAP collection and is also described in the instruction manual. Ensure you carry out any mask adjustment in your normal sleeping position
- when you are happy with the fit and have ensured there is no leak, you can go to sleep as usual



Can I take my machine on holiday?

We recommend you take your CPAP machine when you go on holiday. If you are flying, you can request a travel letter from a member of your care team. Also, contact the airline in advance to tell them you will be taking a CPAP machine as an extra piece of hand luggage.

What if I don't have access to electricity?

Your CPAP machine does not come with a battery and needs to be connected to mains power to work. You can buy or rent a battery pack specifically for your machine.

You can find out more information at www.shop.resmed.com/GB/en/CPAP-Accessories

How can I contact the Sleep Centre?

You can contact us on **020 3311 7188** or by email at imperial.sleeplab@nhs.net.

Please call us if you:

- have a fault with your machine or mask leakages
- need any replacement parts
- have soreness or anything that requires attention from a clinical physiologist

We will book you an appointment, advise you over the phone, or post you the part needed. If you are experiencing problems, you can also call us or leave a voicemail message. We will aim to call you back within one working day.

Please do not walk into clinic without an appointment, as we may not have staff available to see you.

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3312 7777** (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street
London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team: imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk