



Solutions to Common PAP Issues

Claustrophobia

- Relaxation exercises prior to putting on the mask. Diaphragmatic breathing, mindfulness, or progressive muscle relaxation are effective ways to reduce anxiety.
- Suggest patients practice use of the device during the day (i.e., when not trying to sleep) to “desensitize” to the mask, air pressure, and related sensations. Pair with while watching TV, listening to music, working on a puzzle etc.
- Initially, suggest wearing just the PAP mask for short periods of time, followed by attaching it to the hose with the machine turned on during the day.
- Once they can tolerate the mask for longer periods while awake, suggest starting to use the PAP device during a short nap, and then eventually attempting to use it during sleep at night.

Skin Irritation

- Pay attention to size. PAP masks are usually adjustable.
- Ask your PAP supplier to show the patient how to adjust their mask to get the best fit.
- Use additional padding or mask liners where irritation occurs.
- Reduce humidifier temperature.
- Try an alternative mask style or different headgear.

Difficulty Falling Asleep When Using PAP

- Recommend relaxation and desensitization practice during the day as well as while winding down for going to bed.
- Encourage patients not to attempt to get into bed for sleep until they actually feel sleepy.
- Consider consultation with a sleep specialist or behavioral health provider for further evaluation if difficulties falling asleep are persistent.

Excess Water in Tubing/ “Rainout”

- Run the CPAP without any water in the water reservoir for a few minutes until it is dry.
- Use of tube-length insulating wraps will keep the air in the tubing much more insulated and, in turn, reduce the condensation.
- Decrease the humidification setting, and/or use tubing that can be temperature adjusted.
- Add in a heated tube. Most of the more modern CPAP machines have heated tubing available.

Stomach Bloating/Aerophagia

- Address nasal congestion or consider a full-face mask which can allow mouth breathing.
- Decrease overall pressures or expiratory pressures on BiPAP units.
- Consider a trial of prescribed or over-the-counter remedies to treat gas/bloating.

Dry Mouth, Throat or Nose

- Most PAP models include a heated humidifier that attaches to the air pressure machine. Adding this or adjusting the settings (i.e., increase temperature) may help.
- If the patient wears a nasal mask or pillows, use of a separate chin strap may help keep the mouth closed and reduce the air leak.
- Consider a full face mask that covers the mouth and nose.

Nasal Congestion

- Increase humidification.
- Consider non-petroleum based cream in nostrils prior to using PAP.
- Consider a trial of prescription nasal sprays.
- Consider a full face mask that covers the mouth and nose.
- If persistent, consider consultation from an ear, nose, and throat specialist.

Eye Irritation and/or Air Leakage

- Ensure mask is cleaned daily.
- Consider an alternative mask type, such as a nasal pillow, which may allow for more movement during the night.
- Adjust pads and straps to get a better fit. If the mask fits over your nose, make sure it doesn't sit too high on the bridge of your nose, which can direct air into your eyes.
- Some sleeping positions, such as side sleeping, can create position mask leak. Encourage patients with a full face mask to sleep on their back, to try a nasal mask or other style.



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