

TALLAHASSEE PULMONARY CLINIC

Pulmonary Medicine-Critical Care Medicine-Sleep Medicine

CPAP Tolerance Recommendations

RAMP SETTING: CPAP is better tolerated by using a ramp setting, which slowly reaches the desired pressure over 10-20 min. The length of this time can be adjusted on all CPAP machines.

MASK PRESSURE: The mask should not be too tight. If it needs to be very tight for an adequate seal, try a different type of mask or different brand of mask -- there are many types and brands available. Use a forehead spacer to take the pressure off the bridge of the nose. Consider using **Nasal Pillows** to reduce the mask contact with the skin.

MOUTH OPENING: Use a chin strap to prevent air leak from the mouth. Consider a special nasal pillows device that has a built-in chin strap (Optilife). Ensure that the CPAP pressure is optimal -- contact your sleep specialist.

LACK OF HUMIDIFICATION: In general, the CPAP tends to dry out the air and therefore extra humidification is usually required. Most commonly a **Heated Humidifier** is used, which provides more humidification than that achieved by a pass-over (passive) humidifier.

Occasionally, too much humidification can irritate the nasal mucosa and sinuses or the temperature of the heated humidifier may be too high. Personal adjustment is recommended. There should not be any water condensation in the mask

TEMPERATURE: The air coming from the CPAP machine can be cold and this can be corrected by ensuring that the room temperature is adequate or by using a heated humidifier.

NASAL ALLERGIES: Sometimes nasal allergies can be worsened by CPAP. Known allergens in the room should be removed. Frequent vacuuming may be required. Raise the CPAP blower off the floor. Elimination of animals from the bedroom may be helpful. Ensure that the CPAP filters are changed frequently. An in-line fine particulate filter may be useful (Respigard II Marquest Medical Products), but it must be put in line before the humidifier. Use only distilled water in the humidifier. Try CPAP with or without humidification. Try CPAP with or without heat if it is a heated humidifier.

An oral antihistamine taken before sleep, a nasal steroid (e.g. Flonase, Nasonex, Rhinocort), or a nasal antihistamine (e.g. Astelin) may be helpful. However, the maximal effect of nasal steroids may take several weeks.

NASAL DRYNESS: Use a heated humidifier. Obtain a nasal saline spray to use before sleep at night.

NASAL CONGESTION: Check for nasal allergies and if so consider steps above. Use a nasal dilator during sleep such as Breathe-Rite strips over the nose.

NASAL MUCOSAL IRRITATION: Use a heated humidifier, use a nasal saline spray before sleep, and consider putting a small amount of ointment in the nostrils (e.g. Boroleum or Vaseline) before sleep.

SKIN ALLERGIES: Make sure you have a hypoallergenic mask made of silicone. Consider using nasal pillows to reduce mask contact with face.