

“10 common CPAP problems and what you can do about them.”

1) The wrong size or style CPAP mask

Work closely with your doctor and CPAP supplier to make sure you have a CPAP mask that suits your needs and fits you. Everyone has different needs and face shapes, so the right style and size mask for someone else may not work for you.

2) Trouble getting used to wearing the CPAP device

To start, it may help to practice wearing just the CPAP mask for short periods of time while you're awake, for example, while watching TV. Then try wearing the mask and hose with the air pressure on, still during the daytime, while you're awake.

3) Difficulty tolerating forced air

You may be able to overcome this by using a “ramp” feature on the machine. This feature allows you to start with low air pressure, followed by an automatic, gradual increase in the pressure to your prescribed setting as you fall asleep. The rate of this ramp feature can be adjusted by your doctor.

4) Dry, stuffy nose

A CPAP device that features a heated humidifier, which attaches to the air pressure machine, can help.

5) Feeling claustrophobic

While you're awake, practice by first just holding the mask up to your face without any of the other parts. Once you're comfortable with that, try wearing the mask with the straps.

6) Leaky mask, skin irritation or pressure sores

A leaky or an ill-fitting mask means you're not getting the full air pressure you need, and you may be irritating your skin. It can also release air into your eyes, causing them to become dry or teary.

7) Difficulty falling asleep

This is a normal, temporary problem. Wearing the mask alone for some time during the day may help you get accustomed to how it feels.

8) Dry mouth

If you breathe through your mouth at night or sleep with your mouth open, some CPAP devices may worsen dry mouth. A chin strap may help keep your mouth closed and reduce the air leak if you wear a nasal mask.

9) Unintentionally removing the CPAP device during the night

It's normal to sometimes wake up to find you've removed the mask in your sleep. If you move a lot in your sleep, you may find that a full face mask will stay on your face better.

10) Annoyed by the noise

Most new models of CPAP devices are almost silent. But if you find a device's noise is bothersome, first check to make sure the device air filter is clean and unblocked. Something in its way may be contributing to noise.