

Positive Airway Pressure: PAP Therapy

What is PAP Therapy?

Positive airway pressure (PAP) uses airflow through a mask to keep your child's airway open during sleep. It can be continuous airflow, as in Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP), or have different airflow when you breathe in and out as in Bi-level Positive Airway Pressure (BPAP).



The air keeps the nose and throat open during sleep to prevent collapse to let one sleep all night uninterrupted. Key information about PAP:

1. PAP machines can **cure** sleep apnea using just AIR!
2. They are light, quiet, easy to clean.
3. They provide important information to your sleep doctor about your child's sleep when they wear it!

What mask should we choose?



There are 2 different types of children's masks available. Some cover just the **nose*** (**nasal mask**) and some cover both the **nose and mouth** (**full-face mask**).

Starting out with a mask over the nose and mouth can be the easiest way to get used to the air. The air feels less forceful from a big mask. Plus, on a full face mask there is more plastic to color!



How will my child get used to wearing PAP at night?

Children do VERY WELL with CPAP if they are introduced to it with a positive approach.

- **PRACTICE!** When you first get the machine, have your child wear the mask for 10-15 minutes while awake and doing something they like (for example, when watching TV or playing video games). Once they can wear the mask, do the same thing with the air on. While they practice, have them put the CPAP on a stuffed animal in their room at bedtime.
- **DECORATE!** Put stickers on the machine and color the hose and mask. Use permanent markers to turn your child into their favorite super hero or RV character at night.
- **ENCOURAGE!** Use a sticker chart for each step of CPAP. If they get enough stickers, they get a prize. The app on your phone can be encouraging for the older children.
- **Give them control.** Make sure they know how to put the mask on and take it off.
- **Be a role model.** Wear the mask yourself during the day when you're doing laundry or cooking. Make it seem normal and not scary at all, even a little silly.
- **Do not be afraid.** Children pick up on your emotions.
- **Scan this QR to watch a video of Sabretooth with his CPAP! →**



PAP therapy (BACK)

Where do we get the machine and equipment?

Durable medical equipment (DME) companies are people whose job is to work with your family to make sure the PAP machine is working, to replace equipment, and to help ensure your child has the correct mask. They are an important part of your child's sleep team!

DME companies in our area: Respiratory Services of Western New York,
Pro-2, Health Systems Services

How to clean the machine?

- **Mask:** Wash your mask daily with soap and water, like you wash your hands, and then leave to dry. Baby shampoo is best as it does not have any degreasers like dish hand soaps do.
- **Hose:** Clean the hose weekly by soaking it in a mixture of white vinegar and water in a bucket for 15-30 minutes. Hang to dry.
- **Filters:** Change the air filter as the manufacturer recommends or whenever it is visibly dirty (usually every 1-2 months).

Can we travel or have sleepovers with PAP therapy?

Yes, but you don't have to!

If your child is nervous about taking a PAP machine on a sleep over, missing one night of PAP support is OK! Being a normal, happy child is more important than one night of CPAP.

Airlines consider CPAP machines essential medical equipment so they do not count as a carry-on. They come in cases intended for travel. Just empty the water tank before you pack!

If you don't have distilled water on vacation, don't worry, the CPAP can work without water. Using the machine without humidification is not recommended for longer than 2-3 days because it can cause irritation of the nose and throat.

Frequent questions/issues when starting PAP therapy:

1. Distilled water in the tank ONLY! Using tap water can affect the function of the machine.
2. If a rash or skin irritation develops, cushion the interaction between the mask and the skin using things like non-adherent dressings, mask covers or moleskin.
3. If the straps make marks on the face, the mask may be on too tight. Loosen the straps the next night to see if this improves the marks. If you need to have it that tight, there are CPAP-strap cushions you can buy online that can help protect the face from these marks.
4. Burping or passing gas first thing in the morning can be a normal reaction to starting PAP therapy. This is due to swallowing some of the air when sleeping. This is not a dangerous condition. Drinking water first thing in the morning can help.
5. For nighttime bathroom trips, disconnect the hose from the front of the mask. It is easier than taking off the entire headgear and can make it more likely to fall right back to sleep.