

# PAP TREATMENT *tips*

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The American Academy  
of Sleep Medicine  
[www.aasmnet.org](http://www.aasmnet.org)

# DO YOU KNOW *about OSA?*

If you have been diagnosed with Obstructive Sleep Apnea, or OSA, and are on Positive Airway Pressure therapy, or PAP, you might have some trouble adjusting to the treatment.

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*Using PAP therapy, all night, every night, leads to a better quality of life.*

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## **WHAT IS PAP THERAPY?**

Positive Airway Pressure, or PAP, is the most common treatment for OSA. There are different forms of PAP therapy, but all forms help by keeping the airway open during the night. These devices provide a stream of air through a mask you wear while you sleep.

# LEARN ABOUT POSITIVE AIRWAY PRESSURE THERAPY

## HOW MUCH SHOULD I USE PAP THERAPY?

PAP therapy is a lifestyle change. It works best when used every night, for the whole time you are sleeping. You should also use PAP whenever you are napping. Just one night of not using PAP can negatively affect blood pressure.

The more you use PAP, the less sleepy you are during the day. Once you start using PAP, it is very important to talk with your health care provider or home equipment supplier if you have any problems or questions. There are many different solutions that you can try.



## TWELVE TIPS TO HELP YOU ADJUST TO PAP THERAPY

1. Begin using your PAP for short periods of time during the day while you watch TV or read.
2. Use PAP every night and for every nap, making it part of your bedtime routine. Using it less often reduces the health benefits and makes it harder for your body to get used to it. If you are having problems remembering to use your PAP every night, consider joining a support group or ask someone you trust to hold you accountable for using it.
3. Increase your level of comfort by making small adjustments to your mask, tubing, straps and headgear until you get the right fit. If the small adjustments don't work, you may need a different mask or headgear. You can also try using a special bed pillow that is shaped for a PAP mask and/or hose.

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***If the small adjustments don't work, you may need a different mask.***

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4. If the pressure feels too high, use the “ramp” mode on your unit so the air pressure increases slowly to the proper level. Ramp mode will start your device on a low pressure setting and gradually increases the pressure over time. This way, you should be able to fall asleep when your device is on a lower setting. If this does not help, talk to your health care provider about different types of PAP machines.
5. Nasal congestion can be a problem with PAP treatment. Use a saline nasal spray to ease mild nasal congestion.

6. More severe nasal or sinus congestion may be helped by a nasal decongestant. If you continue to have problems contact your health care provider for alternatives.
7. Some PAP devices have heated humidifiers, which are chambers filled with water on a heater-plate. This feature ensures that you are breathing warm, moist air through your mask. Use a humidifier that fits your PAP model if you have a dry mouth, throat or nose.
8. If you are using a heated humidifier and the tubing fills with water, turn down the heat on the humidifier and keep the PAP machine at a level lower than your head.
9. If you find the sound of the PAP machine to be annoying, place a mouse pad or foam under your PAP unit to dampen the sound.
10. Clean your mask, tubing and headgear once a week. Put this time in your schedule so that you don't forget to do it.

11. Regularly check and replace the filters for your PAP unit and humidifier.
12. Work closely with your health care provider or home equipment supplier to make sure that you have the machine, mask and air pressure setting that works best for you.

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*Clean your PAP device and accessories according to their instructions.*

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## **BE PART OF A TEAM**

You are not alone. Your treatment team includes your health care providers and the company that provides and services your PAP machine. Don't hesitate to ask for help if you are having trouble adjusting to treatment.

It can be difficult to adjust to PAP therapy, but it is important to keep trying.

**If you continue to experience problems, talk with your health care provider.**

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