

# Information for patients starting Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) treatment

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We would like to invite you to attend for a trial of Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) treatment as requested by a consultant. This information sheet will explain what CPAP is and answer some questions you may have. It also provides more information about what Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA) is and why CPAP treatment is necessary.

## What is CPAP treatment?

CPAP treatment is a form of non-invasive ventilation. This is provided by a device that produces a continuous pressure that is delivered via a tube and mask to keep your airways open during sleep. This device is most commonly used to treat obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA). We advise wearing this device every night for at least 4 hours, however, wearing this as much as possible whilst sleeping will provide the most benefit.

## What is Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA)?

Sleep apnoea is when you have periods of diminished or paused breathing during your sleep. This can result in your oxygen levels dropping and can cause sleep disruption. OSA is the most common type of sleep apnoea and results from partial or complete obstruction of the airways. There are many possible causes of OSA including:

- Being overweight
- Drinking alcohol and smoking
- Ageing
- Certain physical features or facial structure (e.g. large tongue or receded jaw line)

## What are the symptoms of OSA?

The most common symptoms of OSA include:

- Snoring
- Gasping or choking episodes
- Noticeable episodes where breathing stops during sleep
- Restless sleep
- Feeling unrefreshed in the mornings
- Excessive daytime sleepiness

## What are the risks of untreated OSA?

Untreated OSA can affect your quality of life due to the excessive sleepiness you may feel during the day. This can also increase the risk of having traffic accidents due to reduced alertness. Untreated OSA also increases the risk of health conditions including high blood pressure, heart disease and strokes.

## How is OSA treated?

Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) is the most common treatment for OSA. However, often OSA is related to lifestyle choices, therefore making lifestyle changes such as losing weight, reducing alcohol intake or stopping smoking can improve the severity or even treat OSA. If your OSA is caused by your face and mouth structure, there are also devices that adjust and maintain the jaw into a favourable position to optimise airflow. Your consultant or general practitioner can provide more information about this if necessary.

## What are the side effects of CPAP?

There are some possible side effects of CPAP including:

- Dry mouth
- Skin irritation or face discomfort where the mask sits
- Bloating

We will try our best to modify equipment and provide advice on how to avoid these side effects.

## What will happen after the trial of CPAP?

We will start by giving you a four week trial of CPAP. After this, we will review if the CPAP treatment has been effective and we can make adaptations if necessary during this appointment. We will then have a review after four months of treatment. The reviews will become annual once effective and comfortable treatment has been achieved.

**Please bring all equipment to any appointments as we will regularly replace the equipment for servicing and provide a new mask and tubing. However, if you need any assistance between appointments please do not hesitate to contact us as we are more than happy to help.**

## How do I know if CPAP treatment is effective?

The CPAP machine records data about how often you use the device and for how many hours you use this each night. We can also see whether you are having any reduced or paused breathing events whilst using the device and if the mask is fitting correctly to ensure the correct pressure is being delivered to reduce these events.

Most devices also allow you to connect an app on your smart phone to the device to monitor your own data; you can then call us if there is anything you are concerned about. If your treatment is effective, you should feel symptomatic improvement such as feeling more alert during the day and having a more restful sleep.

Please allow ample time to arrive for your appointment. Our aim is to see you promptly but we will inform you of any delays.

## Additional information

[A-guide-to-your-CPAP-easy-read.pdf \(england.nhs.uk\)](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publications/a-guide-to-your-cpap-easy-read.pdf)

[Sleep-apnea-how-to-start-cpap-therapy-guide-ebook-amer-eng.pdf \(resmed.com\)](https://resmed.com/sleep-apnea-how-to-start-cpap-therapy-guide-ebook-amer-eng.pdf)

[What is a CPAP machine and should you use one for OSA? | Asthma + Lung UK \(asthmaandlung.org.uk\)](https://www.asthmaandlung.org.uk/what-is-a-cpap-machine-and-should-you-use-one-for-osa/)

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