

# Obstructive Sleep Apnoea and CPAP Therapy

A patient's guide

## Obstructive Sleep Apnoea

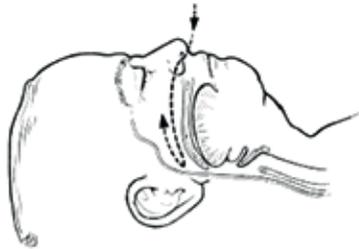
Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA) is the repetitive narrowing or closure of the throat during sleep, which results in pauses in breathing. These pauses can cause oxygen levels to drop and are ended by brief awakenings from sleep. When frequent the resulting sleep disruption often leads to an unrefreshing night's sleep and daytime sleepiness.

Other symptoms include snoring and nocturnal choking episodes. Sleep disturbance sometimes results from the need to pass urine several times a night, or problems with a dry mouth.

OSA can impair memory and concentration and increases the risk of serious road accidents. Obstructive sleep apnoea affects around 3-7% of the adult population. If left untreated OSA may well increase the risks of high blood pressure, strokes and heart disease.

OSA is more common in people who are overweight and significant weight loss can sometimes cure OSA. Other measures which may help include reduction of excess alcohol intake and avoiding sleeping on the back if OSA is worse in this position.

More severe OSA may require treatment with Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP). CPAP blows air into the upper airway during sleep, via either a nasal or face mask and prevents the upper airway from collapsing.



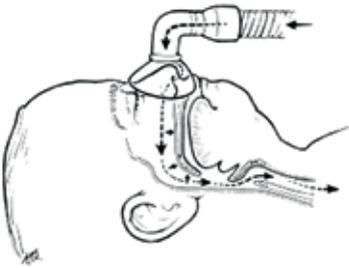
*OSA: During sleep the airway narrows and obstructs breathing*

## Benefits and side-effects of using CPAP

### Benefits

The CPAP system should improve your night's sleep, leaving you feeling more refreshed and alert during the day. It is safe and can be immediately effective.

However for some it may take several days to feel the benefits. It can help treat high blood pressure and is likely to reduce the risk of suffering a stroke or heart attack.



*CPAP: A nasal mask connected to a blower unit provides continuous pressure, which holds open the upper airway and allows regular and normal breathing during sleep*

### Side-effects

The CPAP system may cause nasal symptoms such as stuffiness, blockage or a runny nose. If any of these occur you should mention this to the member of staff looking after you when you are at the hospital. You can also contact the CPAP Practitioners by phone at any time after you have gone home.

Sometimes the CPAP mask can make the bridge of your nose sore. It is important not to pull the headgear straps too tight. We can provide an adhesive dressing that will help to protect your nose.

If the problem persists you should contact the CPAP Practitioners, as you may need to be fitted with a different mask.

### **Starting CPAP therapy**

You will be admitted to the sleep centre as a day case or for an overnight stay to start CPAP where you will be looked after by an experienced team of doctors and nurses who specialise in treatments such as CPAP.

### **Starting CPAP as a day case**

If you are starting CPAP as a day case please expect to be with us for several hours depending on how quickly you adapt to CPAP therapy.

You will be provided with a bed for the duration of your stay and issued with a diagnostic machine which will assess the level of treatment required.

You will be seen approximately one to two weeks after this to swap to your long term treatment device.

### **Starting CPAP as an inpatient overnight**

If you are starting CPAP as an inpatient you will be asked to arrive at 13.30.

Please bring an overnight bag and any medication you require.

You will normally be able to go home the following day and reviewed approximately six weeks later.

### **Discharge from hospital**

Before you leave hospital make sure you know: how to turn your CPAP on and off and how to dismantle your mask and hose. Ensure the type of mask you have is recorded on the back of your booklet.

### **Using your machine**

It is important to use CPAP every night. There is a clock on your CPAP machine which works when the CPAP mask is on your face. Your hours of use are then calculated at each hospital visit. Again, if you are having any problems with CPAP treatment then you can contact the CPAP Practitioners at any time using the numbers given on the back of this leaflet.

### **Caring for your machine and mask**

The mask should be cleaned daily in warm water using a mild detergent. Rinse well once cleaned. The headgear/straps can be washed in the washing machine, ideally once a week. A tumble dryer should not be used.

The CPAP unit should be disconnected from the mains electricity and a damp cloth used to clean the outside.

### **Follow-up**

We will send you a letter with the details of your next appointment. It is essential for you to attend this appointment as we need to check your progress and ensure the CPAP is working effectively.\*

We can also deal with any other issues which may have arisen. You will receive an appointment to be reviewed in our outpatient department.

We also offer outreach clinics for some patients further afield. On some occasions you may be admitted to the ward overnight.

If you experience daytime sleepiness and/or waking feeling unrefreshed you should contact us as you may require an earlier review.

### **Holidays**

Ideally you should take your machine with you whenever you go away. The machines are fitted with a smart chip so can be used around the world and indeed from a 12v battery with the correct adaptor or with a

suitable wattage inverter. If you are going overseas you can request a customs letter from us in the relevant language. It is essential to take the CPAP as hand luggage on the plane, as it can get damaged when stored in the hold.

### **Driving**

Everyone is legally obliged to avoid driving when sleepy, regardless of whether this is due to an underlying medical condition.

People with untreated OSA are known to have an increased risk of road traffic accidents, which is due to the associated sleepiness.

Adequate use of effective CPAP therapy usually reduces daytime sleepiness, allowing driving to continue.

If CPAP therapy is effective and you use it regularly, then there should be no licence problems. However it remains your legal responsibility to be fit to drive, when you drive.

You must tell DVLA if you have obstructive sleep apnoea (also known as sleep apnoea) with symptoms that affect your ability to drive safely.

We advise that you seek clarification from the DVLA regarding notification of your condition.

### **DVLA contact details**

*The DVLA can be contacted by the following:*

Drivers Medical Group, DVLA,  
Swansea, SA99 1TU

**Tel** 0300 790 6806

Mon-Fri, 8:00am-5:30pm

Sat, 8:00am-1:00pm

[www.dvla.gov.uk](http://www.dvla.gov.uk)

Email: [drivers.dvla@gtnet.gov.uk](mailto:drivers.dvla@gtnet.gov.uk)

### **For further information**

[www.sleep-apnoea-trust.org/  
general-guidance-to-drivers.  
htm](http://www.sleep-apnoea-trust.org/general-guidance-to-drivers.htm)

### **The Sleep Apnoea Trust**

Po box 60

Chinnor

OX39 4XE

UK

## Discharge information for CPAP patients

To use email or phone please include:

- Name
- Date of birth
- Telephone number
- Details of mask type and size

### Mask/hose replacements

Tel: 01480 364890

### CPAP Technicians (machine faults)

Tel: 01480 364264

Monday to Friday 08.30 - 16.30

### CPAP Practitioners

Tel: 01480 364526

(Mon to Fri, 9am-5pm)

Email: cpappractitioners@  
papworth.nhs.uk

### Appointment queries

01480 364176

CPAP: \_\_\_\_\_

Mask: \_\_\_\_\_

CPAP pressure: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Papworth Hospital will be unable to accept responsibility for the safety and efficacy of your CPAP equipment, if your machine isn't brought in for regular servicing at these appointments. The CPAP remains the property of Papworth Hospital and if not used must be returned. Tel 01480 364890 for details of returning equipment.*

**Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust**  
Papworth Everard, Cambridge, CB23 3RE

Tel: 01480 830541

Fax: 01480 831315

[www.papworthhospital.nhs.uk](http://www.papworthhospital.nhs.uk)

A member of Cambridge University Health Partners



**SMOKEFREE**

Papworth Hospital is a smokefree site



Keep in touch with Papworth Hospital and receive a quarterly newsletter. Join our membership free of charge at [www.papworthmembership.com](http://www.papworthmembership.com)

Tel: 01480 364240

Author ID: CPAP Practitioner  
Department: RSSC  
Reprinted: June 2015  
Review due: February 2018  
Version: 6  
Leaflet number: PI 25

© Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Large print copies and alternative language versions of this leaflet can be made available on request.