

# Tips for improving CPAP or BPAP adherence

Most patients find it very difficult to tolerate using a CPAP or BPAP. Below are some tips to improve adherence. The Sleep Health Foundation provides fact sheets for patients about CPAP. See:

<http://www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au/fact-sheets-a-z/206-cpap-making-it-work-for-you.html>

Barrier	Potential solution
Lack of understanding of benefits	Ensure that the patient understands that Sleep Disordered Breathing can worsen cardiac disease. CPAP or BPAP can: reduce hypertension, risk of a cardiac event, and in heart failure improve heart pump action
Poor mask fit/ air leak	Position mask on the face so that there are no leaks around skin creases. A protective adhesive such as Mepilex can help minimise the leak
Difficulty getting used to the machine	Encourage patient to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not give up, as it takes 3 to 4 weeks of therapy to see results and improvement will occur over several months</li> <li>• First use CPAP when awake (such as when watching TV) and once accustomed shift to wearing while sleeping</li> <li>• When sleeping gradually increase the number of hours CPAP usage per night</li> </ul>
Claustrophobia	To manage claustrophobia the patient should start by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Holding the mask a short distance from the face</li> <li>2. Once comfortable, try the mask with the straps</li> <li>3. When able, hold the mask and tubing without the straps, with the machine turned on at a low pressure (turn the ramp feature on)</li> <li>4. Next, trial use of the machine while awake</li> <li>5. Finally trial whilst sleeping</li> </ol>
Poor tolerance of positive pressure	Consider use of the machine's "ramp" feature that enables the pressure to gradually rise to a preset level over a period of time, as the patient falls asleep
Dry stuffy nose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage use of a nasal saline spray prior to bed.</li> <li>• Consider humidification and medical referral for nasal steroid spray</li> </ul>

This information is a guide only. It does not replace clinical judgement.