

# The Penn Sleep Centers

## Healthy Tips for Sleep Apnea Patients (Page 1)

- Use your CPAP whenever you sleep, including naps. If you are having trouble using CPAP at first, start by using CPAP for short periods of time during the day, while you watch TV or read, to get used to it.
- If the CPAP pressure feels too strong for you, use the “ramp” setting on your CPAP unit, so that the pressure starts low and increases slowly to the prescribed level.
- Avoid things that can make sleep apnea worse, like: alcohol, smoking, some medications (like sedatives, muscle relaxants and some sleeping pills) and not getting enough sleep.
- Weight gain can make sleep apnea worse. If you are of normal weight, try to stay at your current weight. If you are overweight or obese, weight loss should be an important part of your treatment plan. Talk to your Sleep doctor or nurse about ways to lose weight.
- Treatment of obstructive sleep apnea may improve some of your other medical problems like high blood pressure. After starting CPAP (about 4-6 weeks), you should follow-up with your primary care doctor to re-evaluate your other medical problems and medications. Do not decrease medications on your own.
- Clean your CPAP mask and equipment on a regular basis. Wash all mask parts that touch your face daily. Wash the entire mask, tubing and headgear 1-2 times per week. Use warm water with a mild soap, such as dish soap.
- Empty any leftover water from the humidifier chamber each morning.
- Replace your CPAP mask, tubing and filters on a regular basis. Call your home care company to find out when you are due for replacement supplies.
- CPAP units are usually rented monthly and converted to a sale after a certain number of months, depending on your insurance plan. Call your home care company for any billing questions.
- Take your CPAP with you when you travel. If you travel outside of the United States, you may need an electrical adapter. If you travel to an unusually high altitude for a period of time, your CPAP pressure may need a temporary adjustment. When flying, you should take your CPAP as a carry-on item, but it should not count towards your carry-on allotment. Airport security personnel should be familiar with CPAP equipment.



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## Healthy Tips for Sleep Apnea Patients (Page 2)

- In almost all cases, you can — and should — keep using CPAP when you are sick. If you have a nasal or nasal pillow mask and are having trouble breathing through your nose due to a cold or allergies, you may need to switch to a full face mask until you are better. Talk to your Sleep doctor or primary care provider to see if you can take a decongestant or another type of medication to improve your nasal symptoms. Once you are well again, make sure to clean all of your CPAP equipment in a diluted vinegar solution to kill any remaining germs.
- If you gain or lose 15-20 pounds or more, you may need your CPAP pressure adjusted. Call [Penn Sleep Center \(215.662.7772\)](tel:215.662.7772) for an appointment with your Sleep doctor or nurse.
- Let all of your doctors know that you have obstructive sleep apnea, especially if you have any type of surgery and/or need anesthesia. Ask if you should bring your own CPAP equipment if you need to stay at a hospital overnight for any reason.
- If you have any nasal or throat surgery, your obstructive sleep apnea and CPAP therapy need to be re-evaluated. Please let your Sleep doctor know before you have surgery.
- Your obstructive sleep apnea symptoms should improve with CPAP treatment. If you are using your CPAP with all sleep and are still having apnea symptoms (like awakenings, snoring, increased nighttime urination, headaches upon awakening or persistent daytime sleepiness), you need to call the [Penn Sleep Center \(215.662.7772\)](tel:215.662.7772) for an appointment with your Sleep doctor or nurse.

Source: [www.sleepeducation.com](http://www.sleepeducation.com)

