Changing Your CPAP Supplies

Regular replacement of your CPAP supplies is essential for optimal comfort and proper operation of your CPAP or BiLevel device. Masks, headgear and other disposable supplies have a limited lifespan and should be replaced on a regular basis. Even with routine cleaning, normal usage results in the breakdown of these supplies and may lead to a number of problems.

For example, normal facial oils can cause the soft mask seal to deteriorate. This can cause leaks that are irritating and may result in loss of effectiveness of the CPAP therapy.

In response to these leaks, people will often tighten the straps, which can lead to irritation, soreness and redness of the nose and upper lip. Leaks into the eyes can also be irritating. Routine replacement of the mask and seals will help to minimize this problem.

Another concern is infection. Regular replacement of disposable supplies, along with proper cleaning according to your provider’s instructions, will help to minimize the potential for germ growth in the tubing and mask.

Finally, changing the filters on your machine is important for the proper operation of your CPAP device. Operating your device with dirty filters causes it to run warm and puts extra stress on the machine, causing it to wear out faster.

In order to prevent such problems, your insurer has established a replacement schedule for your supplies. We will ship these supplies for you to replace, according to the schedule established by your insurance company.

The typical replacement schedule established by Medicare is listed here, although your insurer’s schedule may differ.

Every Two (2) Weeks, You Should Replace:
- Disposable Filters
- Nasal Mask Cushions
- Nasal Pillows

Once a Month, You Should Replace:
- Full Face Cushions

Every Three (3) Months, You Should Replace:
- Mask
- Tubing

Every Six (6) Months, You Should Replace:
- Reusable Filters
- Headgear
- Heated Humidifier Chamber
- Chinstrap

Our patients are automatically enrolled in Sleep Central’s re-supply replenishment program unless prohibited by your insurance.

All Medicare patients will receive a supply confirmation call prior to each shipment.
Use of CPAP Lowers Blood Pressure

Obstructive sleep apnea or OSA has been shown to be associated with hypertension (high blood pressure) and evidence suggests that sleep apnea may even be the cause of hypertension in some individuals.

Continuous Positive Airway Pressure, more commonly known as CPAP (SEE’ pap), is the primary treatment for OSA. Using your CPAP as prescribed has many benefits including better sleep quality, reduction of symptoms such as daytime sleepiness, and improvement in quality of life.

Researchers have found that the use of CPAP resulted in a significant improvement in blood pressure in a group of patients with OSA and hypertension. This study was published in the December 2007 issue of Chest, a medical journal.

Compliance Corner—Alternating Masks May Improve Comfort

When you received your CPAP system, you were provided with a mask that the physician, therapist, or sleep technician felt was the best fit for you. There are four different styles of masks:

- **Nasal Mask** – The most commonly used mask. This mask just covers the nose.
- **Full Face Mask** – Larger and covers the nose and mouth.
- **Hybrid Mask** – Has small pillows that rest over or just inside the nostrils.
- **Oral Mask** – Fits into just the mouth like a snorkel.

Within each style of mask, there are different models and brands of masks. For example, Philips Respironics, the nation’s largest manufacturer of masks, has several different styles of nasal masks with different features.

Some patients find it helpful to own two different masks. It could be two different styles of masks (e.g., nasal and hybrid) or two different types of the same style of mask.

The benefit is that each mask tends to have certain pressure points which may get sore over time if the mask is worn too tight. For a nasal mask, the bridge of the nose and upper lip may become sore and on hybrid masks, it is generally the tip of the nose. By having two different masks, you can alternate back and forth between the two if soreness develops.

As your insurer will typically only pay for one mask at a time, you have a couple of options:

- Let the insurer pay for one mask and pay cash for the other, or...
- Most insurers allow you to replace your mask every three months. When it is time to replace your mask, consider trying a different style than your current mask. This may require a new prescription from your physician for the new style of mask.