



# A Buyer's Guide to CPAP Masks

Answers to All Your Questions

Let's Find the Right Mask For You

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## Have you been diagnosed with Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA)?

If that's your reality, SleepQuest can help. Our mission is to give every person the restorative sleep their body needs to stay healthy -- every single night.

For many people with OSA, CPAP treatment is prescribed. It's the tried-and-true, well-researched, time-tested therapy to help patients overcome sleep apnea. Let's examine exactly what CPAP is, why you need it -- then dive into mask-buying.

SleepQuest's Sleep Care Specialists can help guide you to the perfect sleep mask. This buyer's guide was designed to answer the many questions people have about CPAP masks. Our goal is to help you sleep through the night with no problems, with a CPAP mask that does its job comfortably, efficiently, effectively.

### Why CPAP Treatment Is Critical

Continuous positive airways pressure therapy (CPAP) is the leading non-surgical treatment for obstructive sleep apnea, the most common form of this disorder. Snoring heavily and frequent pauses in breathing ("apneas") while sleeping are two of the prime symptoms of this form of sleep apnea.

Obstructive sleep apnea takes a toll on overall health, as this condition reduces the oxygen your body gets every night. This results in an increased risk from serious health conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes and dementia.

The CPAP treatment involves a device which supplies pressurized air through a mask worn when sleeping. The air stops the upper airways from collapsing, preventing the breathing interruptions characteristic of the disorder and allowing for a better night's sleep.

### What Is a CPAP Mask? How Does It Work?

A CPAP mask works by creating a seal around the mouth or nose, or possibly both, to ensure the pressurized air reaches the airways from the device. Your doctor or Sleep Care Specialist will recommend the type of mask they feel is best suited for you to use. The main options are available in four genres of masks:

- A **nasal mask**, aimed primarily at people who breathe through the nose and which completely covers the nostrils.
- A **full face mask**, which may be recommended for someone who tends to breathe through their mouth.
- A **nasal pillow mask**, a more minimal design for those who breathe through their nose that does not cover the bridge of the nose.
- A **combination** mask, a good option for those who are mouth breathers and like combining this with the comfort of nasal pillows or a direct seal interface.

These are the primary forms of masks worn to receive pressurized air from the device. There are other less common styles of masks such as total face covers, hybrids and nasal prongs, but your Sleep Care Specialist will consult with you and suggest the most suitable option.

SleepQuest utilizes a proprietary mask algorithm that helps your Sleep Care Specialist by giving them insight from answers to specific questions that are asked of each patient. We are then able to determine which of the four genres of masks described above will be best given each person's unique method of breathing with the use of positive pressure. During the first 30 days of use we carefully monitor your usage to make sure air leakage is kept to a minimum and that the type of device you're prescribed results in restorative sleep with normal breathing.

### **How the Mask Works**

The mask works by allowing air to be continuously directed to the airways overnight in order to prevent their collapse. It is the narrowing of the airways which leads to breathing difficulties if you have sleep apnea.

The brain responds by prompting the body to awaken for air -- and these often-frequent interruptions ("apneas") place you at increased risk of health complications. If you snore this should subside once a proper mask is prescribed.

The mask is connected to the CPAP device with a hose-style tube. This hose can be around six-feet in length to allow the device to be stored on a table or nightstand near your bed.

The device needs to be positioned on a stable base, allowing enough room for the tube to reach where you sleep without any obstructions. The hose forms a tight connection to the mask, when plugged in, to prevent any air leakage.

### **What to Consider in a Mask**

Factors when selecting the appropriate mask --

- Whether you breathe through the nose or mouth
- Your sleeping position (side or back sleeper)
- The air pressure you require (your doctor will determine this)

The purpose of a mask is to ensure the air reaches the upper airways as you sleep. The mask needs to fit correctly and comfortably regardless of the type used, creating a seal which ensures no leakage of air.

### **How to Put on a Mask**

To put on a mask is quick and simple, regardless of the type of mask you have. Place the mask on the face according to mask type and secure using the straps. Adjust the straps to ensure the mask fits in a snug but comfortable manner.

Habitual mouth breathers normally begin with a Full Face mask or a combination mask. If you begin by using a nasal mask or a nasal pillow mask, a chin strap may be required to prevent mouth breathing if excessive air leakage continues.

## **What to Expect**

The mask will have straps which go around the back of the head -- or top of the head -- to keep it in place as you sleep. It is important the mask feels comfortable so you may need to adjust the straps to achieve this.

Wearing a mask overnight as you sleep can take a little while to get used to. Some people may need longer to adapt than others, but it is important to persevere. The mask needs to be worn every night to manage and treat sleep apnea, returning you to nights of restorative sleep. Therefore, ensuring the mask fits comfortably when worn will help your overall adjustment to the treatment course.

## **Are CPAP Masks Universal?**

Masks are universal, fitting any CPAP machine (except the [AirMini AutoSet Travel CPAP](#)). This is an advantage, as it simplifies your mask purchasing decisions.

This is possible because the majority of the hoses employ standardized connectors, with the mask designed to fit into these connectors. Having standardized connectors makes a mask interchangeable and means finding the most suitable mask is a much easier process.

Finding a comfortable, correctly fitting mask is essential to the success of the treatment course. Nobody wants to wear a mask that is uncomfortable. As a mask is interchangeable, it allows you to work with your Sleep Care Specialist to find the mask best suited for you.

In fact, you could change from a nasal mask -- to a nasal pillow mask -- as your CPAP treatment advances.

Ultimately, the fact that a mask is interchangeable gives you control over what you are wearing as you sleep. You do not just have to put up with the first mask you are given.

CPAP is an on-going treatment which you need to adhere to each night. Being able to find the most comfortable mask will help you “stay the course” with your CPAP treatment.

## **How Can I Find the Right CPAP Mask For Me?**

Everybody is different and to accommodate this, masks are available in many different styles and sizes. The importance of choosing the right mask cannot be overestimated. Our Sleep Care Specialists are experienced at working with each

patient to assist them in determining the best mask for their unique breathing pattern while sleeping.

Trust their expertise and ask to try different styles until you find your favorite.

This extends to mask accessories such as the straps, as these can be just as important in your overall comfort when wearing a mask.

When considering which mask is best, consult with a Sleep Care Specialist to discuss the main types of mask. Most people will wear either a nasal mask, a nasal pillow or a full face mask. A combination mask is designed for the patient who is a mouth breather but prefers a less obtrusive nasal interface provided through pillows or a direct seal.

**Connect with SleepQuest now!** Request a consultation with a Sleep Care Specialist -- and start the journey to getting a good night's sleep: A [Telemedicine Consult](#) with a physician can be provided should you need a new prescription or pressure change.

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## CPAP Mask Supply: Overview

This explains each type of mask and who benefits most from that type. We delve more into specific questions about each mask type in the upcoming pages.

### 1. Nasal Masks

A nasal mask tends to be triangular in shape and will cover the whole nose -- from the bridge down to the upper lip. This is a common mask style, providing a middle ground between a full face mask and the lighter nasal pillow option.

The nasal mask comes in a range of styles and sizes to help you find a mask which works best for you. A nasal mask can be the best option for people who breathe through their nose and not their mouth when sleeping. Your Sleep Care Specialist and your physician may recommend a nasal mask if you require a higher pressure setting for the air supplied by the continuous positive airway pressure device. A nasal mask is also good for:

- People who move about a lot in their sleep.
- People who sleep on their side.
- Those who prefer a more indirect and natural airflow.

[Examples of nasal masks](#)

### 2. Nasal Pillow Masks

A nasal pillow mask also works best for those who sleep with their mouths closed and breathe through the nose. The compact and lightweight nature of this mask style has increased their popularity.

Instead of covering the whole nose, this is positioned on the nostrils, providing minimal contact with the face. In this way, it supplies the pressurized air directly into the nose by creating a seal around the nostrils. Further benefits of a nasal air pillow include:

- Better for those who feel claustrophobic when wearing a full mask.
- Good option for anyone with a narrow nose bridge.
- Less material touching the face.
- Allows you to wear glasses.
- Less surface area for air leakage.
- Easier to wear for people with facial hair.

As with any mask, you should make sure the nasal pillow is comfortable. For some people having air blown directly into the nose can be difficult to adjust to. For that reason, a nasal pillow mask tends to be recommended to those who require a low to moderate air pressure setting.

### Examples of nasal pillow masks

### **3. CPAP Full Face Mask Options**

A full face mask covers both the nose and the mouth. This style of mask is often recommended as the best mask for mouth breathers. As the treatment begins to work -- and the sleep apnea symptoms reduce -- you may find you can replace the full face mask with either a nasal mask, a nasal air pillow mask or combination mask.

A full face mask usually consists of a plastic frame with a soft inner lining to cushion the skin. Straps or a forehead brace are used to attach the mask when worn.

This style of mask can be best for people who suffer with nasal congestion or a nasal obstruction sometimes referred to as a deviated septum.

### Examples of full face masks

### **4. CPAP Combination Mask Options**

A combination mask combines a nasal pillow interface with a fitting that covers the mouth. This newer approach is best for those who like the freedom of the nasal pillows or direct seal while requiring a fitting that prevents mouth breathing. This type of mask is especially helpful for those patients suffering from claustrophobia while needing therapy that prevents mouth breathing.

### Examples of combination masks

## Multiple Mask Options: Answering Your Questions

Today's CPAP masks are designed to solve many problems that patients have with masks. The goal is to keep you comfortable, so you'll get the CPAP therapy you need. Nearly all masks are made with hard plastics and a silicone cushion lining.

### Selecting the Right Mask

If CPAP is the recommended treatment, your Sleep Care Specialist will work with you to find the most suitable mask. There are four main types of masks -- and the type best for you will depend on a few factors, including whether you breathe through the nose or mouth, and whether you experience feelings of claustrophobia.

A **nasal mask** is best suited for people who breathe through the nose. This mask type is triangular and sits over the nose supported by straps which go around the head.

Nose breathers who suffer with claustrophobia may opt for the less invasive **nasal pillow mask**. This mask type is positioned at the base of the nostrils only and therefore has less contact with the face. It is fixed by a strap which goes around the head. There are also newer direct seal masks that are made with a slit as an opening where your nostrils lay on top of for comfort with nothing in the nose.

This can also be a good option for someone who moves around a lot in their sleep. People with facial hair may also benefit from a nasal pillow mask as there is less mask surface area to create a seal with the skin. Your doctor can advise you which is best for you between a nasal mask and a nasal pillow mask.

### Which CPAP Masks Are Best For Mouth Breathers?

Typically, a **full face mask or a combination mask** will be recommended to those with sleep apnea who breathe through their mouths. Some people may be mouth-breathers naturally, or it may result from nasal congestion or a nasal obstruction.

However, many people will find they become mouth-breathers when they develop sleep apnea. They start sleeping with mouths open to adapt to the frequent need for oxygen caused by the interrupted breathing.

A full face mask or combination mask can take a little while to adjust to, particularly if you have issues with claustrophobia. However, once people start CPAP, they often return to breathing through the nose. At this point they may be able to change to a nasal mask, a nasal pillow mask or a direct seal mask.

To begin, though, most mouth-breathers will be provided with a full face mask, which offers less irritation to the nasal cavities. CPAP full face masks include:

- [Fisher & Paykel Vitera Full Face Mask With Headgear](#)



- [ResMed Airfit F20](#)
- [ResMed AirTouch F20](#)
- [ResMed AirFit F30 and F30i Full Face Mask](#)
- [ResMed Quattro Air](#)
- [Dreamwear Full Face Mask](#)
- [Amara View](#)

### [Shop for Full Face Masks](#)

#### **Can I Wear a CPAP Mask With a Beard?**

As the success of CPAP can depend on the effectiveness of the mask's seal, having a beard can potentially present problems. Just the nature of a beard can create more opportunity for air leaks from the mask.

Besides trimming the beard -- or using a mask liner to block the gaps -- there are masks that are recommended to those with beards. These include:

- [AirFit P10 Nasal Pillow Mask With Headgear.](#)
- [DreamWear Full Face Combination Mask With Headgear.](#)
- [DreamWear Gel Nasal Direct Seal or Pillow Mask With Headgear](#)

#### **Sleeping Positions & CPAP**

We all have our favorite sleeping position; some are back sleepers, others are side sleepers. Without the right mask, you could end up experiencing discomfort in the neck and arms -- or having the mask dislodged by your pillow, redirecting the air into your eyes.

People who sleep on their sides or stomachs also tend to have more strap marks on their face especially if the mask straps are too tight.

**Sleep on your side?** In general, a nasal mask, a nasal air pillow mask or a combination mask are recommended for people who sleep on their sides because they allow more movement and have fewer points in contact with the face.

**Sleep on your stomach?** You can also find a full face or combination mask which is appropriate to wear. When sleeping on your stomach, you must not have your face completely buried within your pillow -- as you will be covering the mask's vent and re-inhaling the exhaled carbon dioxide.

Of course, sleeping positions are not universal whether you sleep on your side or back. People sleep in their own slight variations of these positions, with arms down by their side -- or spread out across the bed.

Finding which mask is best for a side sleeper -- or which is best for a stomach sleeper -- is key in ensuring comfort and therefore increasing the likelihood of compliance with the treatment. Examples of a mask for specific sleeping positions include:

### Side Sleepers

- [AirFit P10 Nasal Pillow Mask](#)
- [Swift FX Nasal Pillow Mask](#)
- [Swift FX Nasal Pillow Mask for Her](#)
- [DreamWear Silicone Nasal Pillow Fitpack](#)

### Stomach Sleepers

- [ResMed AirFit F30i Full Face Mask with Headgear](#)
- [Respironics Comfort Gel Blue Full Face Mask](#)

### Is There a Mask For Women?

There are masks on the market designed specifically with women in mind. These are lighter and better suited for women who may have smaller facial features.

One such mask for women is the [Swift LT for Her nasal pillow mask](#). The mask is easy fitting, lightweight, and has soft wraps for additional comfort. The innovative headgear design includes an adjustable back-strap which allows it to be worn under or over the hair. It also comes in the color pink.

The [Swift FX For Her mask](#) is an even lighter version and brings a flexible design to allow for the contours of your face, plus a minimal overall design which feels less intrusive to the wearer. It also comes in the color pink.

Additional choices for women:

- [Quattro FX For Her](#)
- [AirFit P10 For Her Nasal Pillow](#)
- [Mirage FX For Her](#)
- [Swift FX Bella](#)

**Keep Shopping! All SleepQuest mask collections feature “For Her” styles:**

[Full Face Masks](#)

[Nasal Masks](#)

## [Nasal Pillow Masks](#)

### **No Headgear Mask / Nasal Pillow Mask Options**

A mask requires strapping to keep it in place as you sleep, and some people find the headgear on a mask bulky and uncomfortable.

If your Sleep Care Specialist and/or your doctor recommends a nasal pillow mask to treat your obstructive sleep apnea, there are a good range of options. Don't be afraid to try different ones to find the right mask for you.

Nasal pillow masks include:

- [Airfit N30i](#)
- [Airfit P30i](#)
- [Airfit P10](#)
- [Airfit P10 for Her](#)
- [Dreamwear Nasal mask](#)
- [Dreamwear Pillow mask](#)
- [Swift FX Bella](#)
- [Swift LT](#)

## [Shop for Nasal Pillow Masks](#)

### **A Nose-Only Mask / Under-the-Nose Mask**

A nasal mask covers the nose only when worn and is often recommended for people who breathe through their noses only. Alternatively, a nasal pillow mask is attached to the base of the nostrils only and has minimal contact with the face. Working with your Sleep Care Specialist and/or doctor you should be able to find a nose only mask which is best suited for you. Options include:

- [Evora Fitpack](#)
- [Airfit N30](#)
- [Airfit N30i](#)
- [Airfit P30i](#)
- [Dreamwear Nasal mask](#)
- [Dreamwear Pillow mask](#)
- [Brevida](#)

When you turn at night you want a mask which allows you to sleep in comfort undisturbed. The [Philips Respironics DreamWisp Nasal Mask Fitpack](#) removes some of the inhibitive parts of a mask, allowing you more freedom of movement.

With Proven Wisp cushion technology, a seal is formed while minimizing the amount of contact between the mask and the face. As well as the hose being at the top of the head the auto seal mask cushion involves little tubing at the front of the mask, letting you sleep in your preferred position.

### [Shop for Nasal Masks](#)

#### **Masks with a Chin Strap**

For mouth breathers who are using a nasal mask, nasal pillow mask or combination mask they may need to use a chin strap to ensure the mouth remains closed as they sleep. This ensures air from the CPAP device does not escape through the mouth and also helps prevent a dry mouth in the morning.

### [Shop for chin straps](#)

#### **Memory Foam Comfort**

Many people start their CPAP therapy with a full face mask, especially if they are mouth-breathers. Often, after a period of CPAP therapy, patients will return to nose-breathing. In the meantime, these products can help improve comfort.

The [ResMed AirTouch F20](#) is a full face mask which incorporates UltraSoft memory foam cushion technology to deliver their softest mask to date. The memory foam cushion adjusts to the contours of your face, providing comfort and a secure seal.

#### **Gel Cushions on a Mask**

When looking for a comfortable mask, those using gel can be a good solution. The [Philips Respironics Amara](#) full face mask has a gel cushion option to provide extra comfort when wearing your mask. The gel adapts to the contours of your face to provide a good seal as well as good comfort levels.

The [Philips Respironics Dreamwear Full](#) employs Respironic's direct seal technology to offer greater comfort as well as the practical benefits of a good seal. The cushion is also easy to remove and replace without having to replace the whole mask.

#### **Are Masks Made of Latex?**

CPAP masks are made from hard plastics and have a silicone cushion lining which sits against the skin. Some are made from soft rubber or a form of gel material, but only older masks contain latex. Today, almost all masks are produced free of latex.

#### **A Mask With a Top Hose**

The [DreamWear full-face mask](#) has the hose attached to the top of the headgear rather than to the mask. For some mask wearers there are significant benefits to having a mask with a top hose. These include:

- Increased freedom of movement as you sleep.
- You do not have to pre-determine a sleeping position.
- A more open mask design allows you to read or watch television in bed more easily.
- The design of the mask's cushion under the nose can mean less irritation and less red marks on the bridge of the nose.

### **Masks With Magnets**

The [ResMed AirFit N10 nasal mask](#) uses magnets built into the clips on the headgear, which makes it easy to separate the headgear from the frame of the mask. Simply by twisting the lower headgear strap and clip the headgear can be quickly removed from the frame. The headgear is just as easy to re-assemble and the clips are manufactured with a lip to prevent the magnets from sliding off when the mask is worn overnight.

### **Masks Without Head Straps**

Although a mask needs some form of headgear to secure the mask while sleeping, some users prefer options which are strap free or at least have minimal strapping and therefore can feel less invasive.

One such option is the [ResMed AirFit P10 nasal pillow mask](#) whose innovative QuickFit headgear remains snug -- but allows you to easily change position while you are sleeping. This is a lightweight mask which still provides comfort and a stable seal.

### **Oxygen Ports**

Some CPAP users will need additional oxygen supplied due to health conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

A mask can be equipped with an oxygen port. The port is built into the frame and its cap will usually be closed to stop air escaping while you are using your prescribed device. If you require additional oxygen, you can remove the cap and attach the tubing to allow for the oxygen supply.

The [DreamWear full mask](#) is an option. Using a full-face size gauging system held under the nose, it allows you to choose a cushion size. This way most of the mask sits under the nose and over the mouth, providing a more comfortable mask as you sleep. This can also be called a combination mask since it is using a direct seal under the nostrils and a comfortable piece over the mouth.

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## Problems With CPAP Masks

As with any complex device, a malfunction can occur. It's important to track down the cause of the problems so you can get the piece fixed, and continue your CPAP treatment. This section provides answers to the most common problems.

### The Whistling Sound: CPAP or CPAP Mask?

At times, there may be a noise that keeps you from falling asleep. You might hear a slight whistling sound from the CPAP device -- or the mask.

First, try disconnecting the mask from the hose before turning the CPAP device on. If as you cover the opening of the tubing with your hand the noise quits, you may need a better-fitting mask. Sometimes replacing the cushion may prevent whistling.

If the whistling noise comes and goes when you hold the hose, this means it's time to replace the hose. The hose does deteriorate over time and will need replacing every three to six months depending on use.

You can also check for leaks in the hose: try plugging up each end of the hose and placing it in a bowl of water. Lift the hose out of the water; if there are any leaks, you will need to replace the hose. You can also check the hose for cracks and look for mold and mineral deposits within the hose, all signs it is due for replacement.

If you still hear the whistling noise, talk to your Sleep Care Specialist. It may be time to replace your mask.

### CPAP Mask is Leaking

One of the more common issues which can affect a CPAP mask is air leaking from the mask. There can be several reasons why your CPAP mask is leaking air, and most often it's due to an ill-fitting mask.

A mask can also leak if the pressure settings are too high. Initially the air pressure is based on your sleep study. But if there are issues with air leakage, your Sleep Care Specialist may be able to adjust the pressure with a prescription from your doctor.

The condition of the mask itself can also affect its performance. A mask needs to be looked after and maintained, requiring a daily wipe-down with a damp cloth or a mask wipe. The cushion is designed to be replaced every four to six weeks for optimal comfort and needs to be washed daily.

Masks also wear out and need frequent replacing, possibly once every three months. Consult with your Sleep Care Specialist if you have any questions about keeping your mask clean and working efficiently.

### **Prevent Mask Leakage**

If the seal between the mask and the skin is compromised, air will leak out. This is annoying as it can leak into the eyes, making sleep difficult. Also, leaking air may counteract the prescribed air pressure required for the treatment to work properly.

Having a correctly fitted mask can help prevent air leaks. However, as the mask deteriorates with use, leaks can occur -- and one way to remedy this problem is to use a mask liner.

[RemZzz mask liners](#) sit between the skin of your face and the cushion of the mask, creating a barrier to remove or at least significantly reduce air leaks. The mask liners absorb oils from the skin to help produce a more stable seal as well as reduce the deterioration of the mask the oils can cause. Mask liners bring the added benefits of preventing skin irritation and red marks left from the mask.

### **Is A CPAP Mask Uncomfortable?**

You may find different aspects of a CPAP mask uncomfortable, but there are usually solutions.

Again, some of the discomfort could be due to an ill-fitting mask. Working with your Sleep Care Specialist to ensure you have a correctly fitting mask is crucial in maintaining your motivation to persevere with CPAP. The specialist can also show you how to adjust your mask for better comfort overnight.

A mask liner can also increase comfort: [RemZzz mask liners](#)

Sometimes a CPAP mask may feel uncomfortable because it generates a feeling of claustrophobia. Practice may help reduce this feeling. Start off by just holding the mask up to your face during the day, and gradually work up to wearing it with the CPAP all night.

Once you are comfortable with wearing the mask, try wearing it when you go to bed. Make sure your bedroom is optimized for sleep too, with a dark environment, comfortable temperature -- and stop screen time with computer, TV or phones long before bedtime, as all these factors affect quality of sleep.

The pressurized air from the CPAP device can also feel uncomfortable to some people. This should be discussed with your Sleep Care Specialist -- as there's the possibility of setting your CPAP device to a lower pressure setting when you initially go to bed. The pressure could be set to gradually rise to the required level, by which time you would most likely be asleep.

SleepQuest provides each patient with a high end AutoCPAP device, which automatically adjusts air pressure according to your needs. This type of device can be set to work in either Auto mode with a range of pressures prescribed by your doctor or as a single pressure CPAP device. This sophisticated device can be set only to the correct mode by your Sleep Care Specialist. It is important that the range of pressures are set correctly to ensure efficacy and to prevent providing overly high pressure causing the patient to wake up.

### **Sensitive Skin and CPAP Mask**

Wearing a mask overnight as you sleep is not natural and will undoubtedly take some getting used to. Some people will inevitably find a mask uncomfortable for one reason or another. Like glasses or a retainer one should become comfortable with the therapy after two to four weeks of steady use.

One such reason can be pimples from the mask and straps, as they are in contact with the skin. Ensuring you have a properly fitting mask can help reduce this problem. A mask that is too tight can cause irritation and pressure sores -- while one which is too loose will irritate the skin, as it will likely move around while you sleep.

Therefore, having a correctly fitting mask can reduce your chance of pimples. Everyone's features are different and the same mask could fit perfectly for one person but not for somebody else.

Work with your Sleep Care Specialist to find the right mask for you, even if that means trying on different masks. If it is the material of a mask which seems to be causing your acne, you could try buying a mask liner to protect your skin. A 30 day replacement policy is provided for your mask at no charge.

Once again, a mask liner can help: [RemZzz mask liners](#)

### **Eliminating Lines Left By Masks**

If you wake up with line marks from the mask, make sure you have a properly fitted mask. Also, take care in keeping the mask straps somewhat loose so the mask is comfortable yet not too snug. Gently tighten or loosen the mask -- bit by bit -- until it feels comfortable with just the right fit.

Your Sleep Care Specialist can show you the best way to tighten and adjust your mask straps.

Also, there are products and materials which can be used to help reduce lines made by a CPAP mask.

Mask liners can protect your skin from the silicone lining: [RemZzz mask liners](#)

Soft wraps, including cloth wraps, can have a similar effect. An aloe gel will cool on the skin, and can help loosen the mask a little without compromising the seal.



[Nasal pads](#) can also be beneficial if you have sores on your nose bridge from the CPAP mask.

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## Side Effects of CPAP Masks

Although CPAP helps eliminate the symptoms of sleep apnea, it is not without the risk of a few potential side effects. Perhaps the main side effect can be one of discomfort. Some people will find inhaling the pressurized air is not a problem, but exhaling is uncomfortable -- particularly if the pressure setting is high. When the pressure setting is too high, it can also lead to aerophagia or air swallowing. You can find yourself bloated and suffering with gas. There are also devices that provide a higher inspiratory pressure and a lower expiratory pressure that your doctor may suggest to prevent aerophagia from occurring.

The mask and hose may feel bulky and make it difficult to sleep in your normal position. For people wearing a mask, particularly a full face mask, there may be a claustrophobic feeling -- although you may get used to the mask over time.

While the devices made today are quieter, they still generate some noise which can also take a little while to get used to and can impair your falling asleep at the beginning of your treatment course. Other reported side effects include:

- Dryness in the nose or mouth
- Infections when mask not cleaned regularly
- Skin irritation and red marks
- Headaches
- Shortness of breath

The chance of experiencing some of these side effects can be reduced by ensuring you have a correctly fitting mask and the mask is regularly cleaned. Every in-home positive airway device provided by SleepQuest comes with a heated humidifier to prevent dryness in the nose or mouth.

If you have a side effect, consult with your Sleep Care Specialist and your doctor to find a solution. Remaining compliant with CPAP therapy is key to reducing the symptoms of sleep apnea and reducing the risk of the serious health conditions linked to the disorder.

Therefore, addressing any side effects which could deter you from continuing with your treatment plan is important.

### **Wearing a CPAP Mask and Jaw Pain**

The temporomandibular joint (TMJ) connects the jawbone to the skull -- and disorders of this joint can result in pain within the joint and the muscles which support it. Ear pain and headaches can also be associated with a TMJ disorder.

Some people who suffer with obstructive sleep apnea may also have problems with their TMJ. The frequent interruptions in breathing experienced with sleep apnea prompts the brain to signal a “need” for air. This need to keep the upper airways open to breathe can lead to teeth grinding and clenching, resulting in an increased risk of a TMJ disorder.

Mouth breathers with sleep apnea may use a chin strap with their mask to keep the jaw closed as they sleep. A full face or combination mask is designed to prevent mouth breathing so one of these types should be tried first.

### **Masks and Panic Attacks**

Some people experience panic attacks linked with the frequent interruptions to sleep, as sleep deprivation can hinder the brain’s ability to deal with levels of stress. The addition of the unfamiliar mask can also lead to feelings of suffocation and panic attacks.

Taking steps in getting used to wearing the mask is a good idea. When you feel comfortable with it during the daytime, this will relieve some of the fears and reduce the chance of a panic attack.

Breathing exercises can also help. If you begin to feel panicked when wearing the mask, slowly count to ten as you focus on your breathing. This can help the body to breathe fine with a mask on -- and you should begin to relax and dispel any of the tension.

Of course, having the right mask will help you feel more at ease and increase your comfort level. You may need to consult with your Sleep Care Specialist to ensure you have a mask that works best for you, to avoid panic attacks.

### **Can My Mask Make Me Sick?**

A mask has the potential for a buildup of bacteria and germs which could potentially make you sick. Sinus infections and pneumonia are conditions which could result from a mask which is not being properly cleaned.

When you first receive all your treatment’s equipment, it will be unused and sterile. From then on with each use you could be breathing germs into the mask which may make you sick. Water buildup in the hose can also be a breeding ground for bacteria. However, with a proper cleaning routine in place, none of this should be a problem.

By following a basic daily and weekly cleaning routine, you can reduce the risk of illness. After cleaning, make sure you air-dry the parts. Make sure they have dried thoroughly before their next use.

### **Should You Continue With Treatment If You Have a Cold?**

Having a cold can certainly make wearing a mask more difficult, depending on the severity of the illness. With a cold the nose is likely to become congested, making it harder to breathe properly when wearing the mask. At this point you may be tempted to give your treatment a miss until the cold clears.

Generally, this should not cause any issues, but you may wish to discuss with your doctor to allay any doubts. If your cold is fairly mild and any nasal congestion quite minor, you may well find continuing with your treatment actually helps relieve your cold symptoms as the pressurized air keeps your airways open.

## **CPAP Masks, Parts and Supplies**

The overall effectiveness of CPAP therapy relies on all the parts. The air pressure setting will originally be determined from your sleep tests and an appropriate treatment device recommended for use.

Besides the standard devices which supply air at a set constant pressure there are also Auto CPAP devices, which supply air with a pressure range that can be adjusted on a regular basis.

### **Auto CPAP/Auto PAP**

Auto PAP or automatic titrating positive airway pressure involves a CPAP-like device which supplies a constant stream of pressurized air. However, with Auto PAP the air pressure setting can be adjusted as you sleep.

Instead of having one fixed pressure setting throughout the night, an APAP device can automatically adjust the pressure setting if conditions change during the night.

The AutoPAP device has a low-level pressure setting and a high-level setting, and will fluctuate between the two through the night -- without any intervention by the patient.

- [Philips Respironics DreamStation Auto](#)
- [ResMed AirSense 10 AutoSet](#)

### **Travel AutoPAP**

One of these is the [AirMini Travel AutoSet from ResMed](#) which can come with the mask too. This compact device makes travelling easier, ensuring you always have your device wherever you are, important in keeping up with your vital treatment plan.

Other portable/travel devices include:

- [DreamStation Go](#)

[Shop for Auto CPAP / Travel CPAP](#)

## **Supplies**

Besides the device and the mask, there are a number of other supplies which help make the treatment more comfortable and effective. These include:

- Tubing
- Chin Straps
- Cleaning products
- Full face, pillow, direct seal and nasal cushions
- Filters
- Humidifier chambers
- Device power supplies

Manufacturers such as ResMed, Respironics and Fisher & Paykel specialize in products for CPAP. Some supplies will help your comfort level which is key in success with your treatment. These include nasal pads and mask liners which can help make wearing a mask overnight a more comfortable experience.

## **Hose and Tubing**

Regular replacement of the tubing or hose which connects your mask to your device helps maintain the effectiveness of the treatment. Condensation within the hose can increase the risk of a buildup of contaminants and therefore they should be replaced as often as recommended by the manufacturer. Hoses for all major branded machines are straightforward to replace with the main tubing types being either standard or heated hoses. Every in-home device provided by SleepQuest comes with a heated humidifier to prevent condensation and increase comfort.

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[Shop SleepQuest's complete line CPAP products](#)

## Where Can I Buy CPAP Masks?

When buying or replacing a mask, you should look to work with a specialist supplier like SleepQuest -- with expertise advising you on purchasing the right mask.

### Finding Mask Suppliers

You may decide the easiest option is an internet search along the lines of 'Are there CPAP mask suppliers near to me?' or perhaps 'Where to buy a CPAP mask' and 'how much do they cost?'

There is no doubt you can buy masks from a mass marketplace online site such as Amazon.

However, you won't be able to tap into a Sleep Care Specialist's knowledge which can guide you toward the best mask for you.

### SleepQuest's Sleep Care Specialists & Ongoing Support

By purchasing through SleepQuest, you will benefit from a consultation with a Sleep Care Specialist who can help you evaluate your choice of mask -- and find one that fits you best. They will ask several questions that will assist in finding the right mask for you.

SleepQuest provides ongoing support to help you optimize your treatment plan. Our sleep experts can help you with all your equipment supplies including the mask.

Re-ordering is simple as previous orders are held digitally, allowing you to order the same mask as before. An automated reminder system helps you to keep on top of replacing your equipment.

A mask will soften over time, which loosens the seal, so these timely reminders will ensure you do not forget to replace your CPAP mask and/or cushion.

### Where Can I Buy Different Style Masks?

Another internet search might be "are there nasal pillow masks or full face mask suppliers near me."

Certain criteria such as whether you breathe through your nose or your mouth can determine which style of mask may be best for you.

Whichever style has been recommended by your doctor or Sleep Care Specialist, you can buy online at SleepQuest. Our Sleep Care Specialist coaches can also help guide you to the best mask style for your individual needs. Whether you are looking to buy a full face mask, a nasal mask or a nasal pillow mask, it is simple and convenient to purchase from an online specialist supplier like SleepQuest.

## Mask Supplies and replacement parts

Another search you may make online is “are there any mask and mask parts replacement suppliers near me?”

An online search will likely include well known online marketplaces like Amazon who stock replacement parts for masks and other equipment parts.

However, they do not have the in-house Sleep Care Specialists knowledge which SleepQuest can offer to help guide you when purchasing the replacement parts suitable for your treatment equipment.

Parts you may need to replace from time to time include:

- [Mask cushions](#) which are available in a variety of sizes for full face masks, combination, pillow and nasal masks
- [Cleaning products](#) to help keep equipment clean and disinfected
- [Filters](#) to help remove particles such as household dust and pollen
- [Humidifier chambers](#) to warm up the pressurized air and help avoid a dry mouth or dry nose
- [Chin straps](#), often used by mouth breathers to help keep the mouth closed while asleep
- [Comfort items](#) such as mask liners

A specialist like SleepQuest can help you replace your mask and essential equipment parts when required. Products are stocked from leading main suppliers including:

- ResMed
- Fisher Paykel
- Philips Respironics

## SleepQuest Customer Service

As well as benefiting from SleepQuest's in-house Sleep Care Specialists, customers can use the reorder supplies portal to view the items they have previously purchased. This helps to ensure you re-order the correct items and also order supplies which are based on your insurance policy.

By registering with the portal, you will also receive an email when you are eligible to re-order supplies.

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[Shop SleepQuest's complete line CPAP products](#)

## Purchasing Your CPAP Mask

Everyone has questions about buying the correct CPAP equipment, including masks. This section helps to clarify the process.

### Do I Need a Prescription for CPAP?

A medical prescription is required to sell a continuous positive airway pressure device as they are classed as a Class II medical device with potential risks by the US Food and Drug Administration agency. Any seller of these devices must have a prescription on file before they are allowed to ship the equipment.

If you have been diagnosed with obstructive sleep apnea, then you might be prescribed CPAP therapy to treat the symptoms.

Although it is possible to buy a device from online marketplaces, it is strongly advised not to do so. The treatment is available on a prescription-only basis and without a prescription, sales of the devices are not technically legal.

There are health concerns too when buying via this method. There will be uncertainty about the device's age and whether it has been previously used and maintained and cleaned properly.

Besides sanitary concerns of buying a used device, there will also be issues regarding the air pressure settings for your own personal requirements. It is important to work with medical professionals to monitor treatment progress and to get the best outcome from your device.

### U.S. Residents

SleepQuest's Sleep Care Specialists can request from your doctor the necessary prescriptions for U.S. residents.

### How Will I Pay for My Mask?

A CPAP mask does not require a separate prescription and should be replaced often. The Medicare recommendation for mask replacement is every 3 months.

You can still buy all your required parts without using insurance, although you will still need a prescription for the CPAP device and masks. Those who choose to pay without insurance may often be offered significant cost savings.

### Using Health Insurance (or Self-Pay)

SleepQuest masks and products can be bought with or without insurance. The online store is designed for self-pay for those who would prefer to buy their masks and replacement supplies without using insurance. A cash option is also available for those who prefer to use their HSA/FSA dollars for products and services.

However, SleepQuest's experienced staff can work with your insurance provider to cover the costs of their services and products and can be supplied from either their webstore or their VirtualCare department

Most health insurance providers will cover your diagnosis and treatment plans providing the relevant medical professional documentation is in place.

SleepQuest provides assistance to help new customers who wish to use insurance to cover payment costs, as well as existing customers who wish to continue using insurance when ordering replacement supplies.

Once you are a customer, SleepQuest offers free shipping on orders over \$99 without insurance or no charge for patients who have insurance as long as that order includes a mask.

### **How Much Does a Device and Mask Cost?**

There are a number of different brands who manufacture CPAP devices and their parts, including masks. These brands and the different technologies will be reflected in the cost.

The average price of an initial CPAP device can vary from \$500 up to \$3000 depending on the manufacturer and features that it includes. This cost should include all the parts required, including your mask.

As with the devices, the price of a mask can vary depending on the type -- but are usually between \$40 to \$180. The price can vary and be more expensive depending on the materials used, but ultimately you should be looking for a mask which is the correct size and fit for you.

### **Finding the Right Masks to Buy**

Selecting the right mask is extremely important to help prevent air leakage and issues such as skin irritation or red marks on the skin.

Once the most suitable type of mask has been recommended, you will want to find one which is snug and comfortable, not too loose or too tight. Everyone is different -- and sizes from extra small masks to extra large masks -- are available. Mask sizing templates can be used to determine the right sized mask for you.

For example, the Airfit N30 or the **Mirage FX** in its standard form will fit around 90% of users. However, there is also the Airfit N30 Small Wide or Mirage FX Wide version of the mask for people who require a wider fitting frame and cushion width.

The Airfit F20 or the **Quattro** FX is another example of how masks are manufactured with different facial sizes in mind. These masks have three sizes and are available in small, medium and large.



Finding a correctly fitting mask is crucial to successful CPAP therapy and reducing the symptoms of obstructive sleep apnea. Sleep Care Specialists at SleepQuest will work with you to ensure you obtain a mask that fits correctly and is the right size.

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Re-ordering is simple as previous orders are held digitally, allowing you to order the same mask as before. An automated reminder system helps you to keep on top of replacing your equipment.

A mask will soften over time, which loosens the seal, so these timely reminders will ensure you do not forget to replace your CPAP mask and cushion.

### **Let's Get Started!**

We hope we've answered your questions about mask-buying -- and set your mind at ease about any potential problems with masks. Our team at SleepQuest is dedicated to helping everyone get a good night's sleep, every single night, for your long term health and wellness.

**Connect with SleepQuest now!** Request a consult with a Sleep Care Specialist -- and start the journey to getting a good night's sleep: [Telemedicine Consults](#)

### **Ready to Start Shopping?**

As you've read in these pages, several types of masks are available. In many cases, people can transition from a full face mask to a nasal mask, after they adjust to treatment. In time, you might be able to cut back on CPAP -- with the right lifestyle changes. Your SleepQuest Sleep Care Specialist will explain it all to you.

Feel good about the steps you're taking to improve your health. You're being proactive, and you will help ensure a long, enjoyable life.

[Shop SleepQuest's complete line CPAP products](#)

## Refer a Friend or Family Member

### Do You Know Someone With Sleep Problems?

In-home testing is an easy way they can learn if they have obstructive sleep apnea. SleepQuest provides a very easy-to-use in-home testing device that will provide answers.

It's critical that anyone with sleep problems gets tested for obstructive sleep apnea, as this can have serious health implications if the symptoms are not addressed. These symptoms include:

- Loud snoring
- Frequent interruptions in sleep
- Waking up gasping for breath
- Morning headaches and dry mouth
- Increased irritability
- Poor concentration
- Excessive daytime fatigue

Diagnosis is key to receiving the necessary treatment to eliminate the symptoms of sleep apnea and thereby reduce the risk of associated health problems. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms an in-house sleep test offers a convenient and quick method of diagnosis.

### SleepQuest's In-Home Sleep Testing

SleepQuest provides an in-home sleep test where the equipment is delivered directly to your home and which is straightforward to use. The test requires wearing a very small probe on your finger as you sleep.

This probe is connected to a small device which measures bodily functions such as pauses in your breathing, snoring, blood oxygen levels and heart rate. These measurements are analyzed by experienced sleep professionals who can quickly provide a diagnosis. The quicker you are diagnosed, the quicker you can receive the treatment you require.

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**FAX**  
866-721-8481

**CALL 9AM TO 5PM PST**  
844-477-6398

**EMAIL**  
[intake@SleepQuest.com](mailto:intake@SleepQuest.com)

**WEBSITE**  
[www.sleepquest.com](http://www.sleepquest.com)