



Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP)

Snoring Problems

Forty-five percent of normal adults snore at least occasionally, and 25 percent are habitual snorers. Problem snoring is more frequent in males and overweight persons and it usually grows worse with age. Snoring sounds are caused when there is an obstruction to the free flow of air through the passages at the back of the mouth and nose.

Only recently have the adverse medical effects of snoring and its association with Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) and Upper Airway Resistance Syndrome (UARS) been recognized. Various methods are used to alleviate snoring and/or OSA. They include behavior modification, sleep positioning, Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP), Uvulopalatopharyngoplasty (UPPP), and Laser Assisted Uvula Palatoplasty (LAUP), and jaw adjustment techniques.

What Is Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP)?

Nasal CPAP delivers air into your airway through a specially designed nasal mask or pillows. The mask does not breathe for you; the flow of air creates enough pressure when you inhale to keep your airway open. CPAP is considered the most effective nonsurgical treatment for the alleviation of snoring and obstructive sleep apnea.

If your otolaryngologist determines that the CPAP treatment is right for you, you will be required to wear the nasal mask every night. During this treatment, you may have to undertake a significant change in lifestyle. That change could consist of losing weight, quitting smoking, or adopting a new exercise regimen.

Before the invention of the nasal CPAP, a recommended course of action for a patient with sleep apnea or habitual snoring was a tracheostomy, or creating a temporary opening in the windpipe. The CPAP treatment has been found to be nearly 100 percent effective in eliminating sleep apnea and snoring when used correctly and will eliminate the necessity of a surgical procedure.

So, If I Use A Nasal CPAP I Will Never Need Surgery?

With the exception of some patients with severe nasal obstruction, CPAP has been found to be nearly 100 percent effective, although it does not cure the problem. However, studies have shown that long-term compliance in wearing the nasal CPAP is about 70 percent. Some people have found the device to be claustrophobic or have difficulty using it when traveling. If you find that you cannot wear a nasal CPAP each night, a surgical solution might be necessary. Your otolaryngologist will advise you of the best course of action.

Should You Consider CPAP?

If you have significant sleep apnea, you may be a prime for CPAP. Your otolaryngologist will evaluate you and ask the following questions:

- Do you snore loudly and disturb your family and friends?
- Do you have daytime sleepiness?
- Do you wake up frequently in the middle of the night?
- Do you have frequent episodes of obstructed breathing during sleep?
- Do you have morning headaches or tiredness?

Suitability for CPAP use is determined after a review of your medical history, lifestyle factors (alcohol and tobacco intake as well as exercise), cardiovascular condition, and current medications. You will also receive a physical and otorhinolaryngological (ear, nose, and throat) examination to evaluate your airway.

Before receiving the nasal mask, you would need to have the proper CPAP pressure set during a “sleep study.” This will complete the evaluation necessary for prescribing the appropriate treatment for your needs.



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