

WHAT IS PAP?

Positive Airway Pressure (PAP) is a common treatment for sleep apnea. PAP is a device that delivers air pressure while you sleep.

How does PAP work?

The PAP device is made of a small, quiet motor that pulls in room air (not oxygen), raises it to a specific pressure, and the delivers the pressure through a mask. This pressure keeps your airway open through the night. By keeping your airway open, your breathing returns to normal, and it prevents the sleep disturbances caused by sleep apnea.

Learn about your PAP device

Blower

device. It's a small motor inside your PAP Mask that pulls in room air. The motor then makes the air's pressure higher. This pressure keeps your airway open when you sleep. **Humidifier or water chamber**

The humidifier adds water to air to prevent dry mouth. You can adjust your humidifier to your needs.

The blower is the main part of your PAP

Tubing

The tube connects your device (blower and humidifier) to your mask. The tube is rigid so you can't pinch or crush it. The tube can also swivel so you can sleep in different positions. Some tubes are heated, so that the air stays warm as it travels to the mask.

Data card or modem

Some PAP devices have a data card to collect nightly data on how much you use your PAP and how well it works. Others have a modem that sends the information to a cloud-based server.

When is PAP used to treat sleep apnea?

To reduce symptoms. When someone has sleep apnea symptoms, PAP treatment may be prescribed. Common symptoms include:

- Feeling sleepy during the day
- Falling asleep while driving
- Waking up with headaches
- Feeling irritable or moody
- Trouble with attention or concentrating
- Snoring loud enough to disturb a bed partner

PAP therapy may also be used to help lower blood pressure in people with sleep apnea.

Types of PAP

There are different PAP devices:

- The most common is PAP (Positive Airway Pressure). PAP provides a stable pressure that sends room air into your airway through your mask.
- Other PAP devices, such as auto-PAP (APAP), can change the level of air pressure through the night.

Resources

Mayo Clinic video:

How PAP controls sleep apnea

Harvard Medical School Division of Sleep Medicine:

Nonsurgical apnea treatments