

CPAP TITRATION

Once you have been diagnosed with sleep apnea, this study may be done to determine if CPAP, which is a type of treatment for sleep apnea will work for you. At this time, CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure), is the definitive treatment for sleep apnea. Sleep apnea is caused by the collapse of your upper airway. This may be caused by excessive soft tissue in your airway or simply a small airway. Sometimes sleep apnea is caused by being overweight but this is not always the case. We often see very thin people with sleep apnea. CPAP works by providing a device (cpap machine) that blows air via a mask worn on the face. The pressure created from the machine will hold your airway open so that you can continue to get air and oxygen into your lungs while you sleep.

During the study you will have electrodes placed on your scalp which will enable the technologist to see your brain waves. These electrodes are affixed with a conductive “paste”, which, although water soluble, will take thorough shampooing to remove from your hair. Therefore, it might not be a good idea to have your hair colored or styled that day because of the shampooing required to remove this paste. The sleep center boasts a “home-like” environment with traditional bedroom furnishings and comfortable bedding. Blankets, towels and washcloths are available. Each bedroom has its own private bathroom. Cold drinking water is available at the center but if you usually have a bedtime snack you will need to bring that with you. A small refrigerator is available.

Before the CPAP study begins the technologist will show you a few CPAP masks and help you choose which mask is right for you. The mask must fit the contours of your face properly so that as the CPAP pressure is raised it does not allow any air to escape. The study will begin with CPAP at a low pressure. As you fall asleep the technologist will increase the pressure in small increments until a pressure is reached that will stop your apnea and your snoring. If the mask begins to leak air as the pressure is increased, the technologist may have to change to a different type of mask.

The study will last from the time the technologist turns out the lights (close to your usual bedtime) until the technologist awakens you, usually around 6am. Most insurances and Medicare require at least 6 hours of time in bed. If you need to get up earlier than 6am, talk to the technologist and they will work with you to accommodate your time requirements. If you do not drive, make sure that those who provide your transportation know to drop you off no earlier than 8:00pm and must be back to pick you up no later than 7:00 am. If you have physical limitations you may need to bring a caregiver with you. The technologists are not allowed to administer medications or provide any kind of specialized nursing care. If you cannot transfer yourself from your wheelchair to the bed or toilet or you are afraid you might fall if left unattended, you may need to have a caregiver present during the study. Patients under the age of 16 must have a parent or legal guardian present during the study. If a caregiver must stay, there is a recliner in the room in which the caregiver can rest. No one will be allowed to sleep in the bed with the patient during the study.

Your follow-up visit with the doctor will be approximately 2 to 3 weeks (according to availability, this time could be longer) at which time you will receive your study results. If the physician has determined that you would benefit from treatment with CPAP, he/she will write a prescription and the staff will help arrange for your CPAP therapy. The type of insurance you have may determine exactly where you can get your equipment. After you have been wearing your CPAP every night for approximately one month, you will need a follow-up appointment to monitor your progress, reassess your symptoms and make any changes needed.