Useful Info for CPAP Mask Users

by: The CPAP Shop
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Introduction

CPAP therapy saves lives. It is with that phrase in mind that creating a positive CPAP therapy experience for all CPAP users is of critical importance. Something as simple as wearing a properly fitted CPAP mask can often be the difference between using a CPAP machine and discontinuing treatment. With more focus being put on the benefit of CPAP therapy, CPAP masks have come a long way in terms of choice, comfort and design. With all the different styles and choices available, purchasing the proper CPAP mask specific to your needs and facial structure can be a complicated process. It may be necessary to use a few different types or styles before finding one that allows you to sleep comfortably while using CPAP therapy.

One key to successfully finding the right mask choice for you is knowledge. In an effort to assist CPAP users understanding of what is available and best practices for CPAP masks, The CPAP Shop has created this ebook which can be helpful in narrowing the choices for finding the perfect mask. By understanding the different styles, types and brands available, it increases the likelihood of a creating positive CPAP therapy experience, increasing compliance and, therefore, a better quality of life.
7 Ways to Improve CPAP Sleep Therapy, Increase Compliance, and Enjoy a Better Quality of Life

As many CPAP users know, CPAP sleep therapy can dramatically impact your quality of life. Millions of people have found that a CPAP machine and CPAP mask are now constant bed partners and are much happier for it. The benefits of reduced risk from conditions such as hypertension and high blood pressure to stroke are compelling enough to push through the struggle of compliance. Below we have compiled a list of a few simple ways you can improve your sleep therapy, increase compliance and enjoy a better quality of life.

Be Knowledgeable

With all the upheaval in health care, it is more important than ever for people to take responsibility for their treatment. An informed CPAP user is a satisfied user. Take time to ask questions of your doctor and equipment provider. Understand how the equipment works, what it is supposed to do for you and set expectations. Do not be fearful of trying something new – be it CPAP supplies, or a new doctor or equipment provider if something is not meeting your expectations.

Latest CPAP Technology

CPAP equipment has improved dramatically. In particular, CPAP machine technology has improved more in the last few years than over the last decade. CPAP machines have become smaller, lighter and technologically sophisticated. CPAP auto machines have become the most popular choice among new users as they tend to meet the CPAP requirements of a wider selection of people and are much less intrusive. These machines will tell you when you are using it properly, when you are not and how to improve and optimize your sleep therapy.

Get a CPAP Mask that Fits

CPAP users are constantly discussion ways to stop leakage. Although sometimes this is not an easy task, it generally can be overcome with a proper mask that is fitted correctly. Be aware that no single CPAP mask is best for everyone. With the number of selections increasing especially among nasal pillow masks, try as many CPAP masks as possible. Make sure the fit is comfortable to your face structure and it is comfortable while awake. It is also beneficial to have a few different style masks that can be interchanged continuously. This will help prevent sore spots and pressure points and improve CPAP sleep therapy.

Keep it Clean

Cleaning a CPAP mask and tube should be included in your daily routine. There are many products like CPAP wipes and cleaners that can help to ease the burden. If CPAP cushions and tubes are not cleaned, it can lead to stuffy nose, colds and bacteria. These issues will negatively impact CPAP therapy and reduce compliance. At the very least, drop your CPAP mask and tube into non-scented soapy water, rinse and let it sit to dry.
Get New Filters

Keeping with the clean theme, we have talked to many CPAP users who do not even know where the filter is on their CPAP machine. This goes back to being knowledgeable about your treatment and CPAP equipment. But without a clean filter, a CPAP user will not get optimal treatment out of their CPAP machine. As dust and particles collect in the filter, it restricts airflow, which, in turn, forces the machine to work harder. Moreover, more dust and debris will get into the tube, CPAP mask and directly into the airways potentially causing problems. Replacing a filter is a simple procedure. Simply, CPAP filters should be changed when they get dirty. It also makes sense to keep a supply around the house to replace as needed.

Get Full Value from CPAP Equipment

It is not always necessary to buy a new CPAP mask, as many parts are available to replace aging and unusable equipment in nearly every CPAP mask. When a cushion leaks, it most likely needs to be replaced. Ask your equipment supplier which mask has replaceable cushions and buy some with your new mask. Once a cushion loses its integrity, the tendency is to tighten the mask, which causes sore spots. Also, headgear will eventually lose its pliability after many washings. This also causes a CPAP user to synch up the headgear. Therefore, a new cushion and headgear are an simple and inexpensive way to maintain overall positive CPAP experience without having to spend a significant amount of money.

Maintain Expectations and Consistency

As a new CPAP user, expectations should be reasonable, as there will be many changes to your lifestyle. It is important to understand the CPAP therapy and determine how it will impact your overall quality of life. Because being diagnosed with sleep apnea is serious, committing to treatment and persevering through some trials and tribulations will positively affect the impact of the sleep therapy. Also know that there are many forums, chat board and equipment providers, such as The CPAP Shop, that can help at every turn. Have a support network to work through the challenges, eventually having a consistent regiment.

If you follow these simple guidelines, CPAP therapy will become a non-factor in your daily life. We encourage all CPAP users to ask questions and take responsibility for getting the best treatment, information and equipment for their particular needs. As always, The CPAP Shop is here to help!
Choosing Your CPAP Mask:

Making the Proper CPAP Mask Choice

Having a CPAP machine that is correctly programmed and meets one’s needs is vitally important. Selecting a CPAP mask is just as crucial, especially for compliance.

Mask Size

Because there are no industry standards, sizing can vary greatly not only among manufacturers but even within the mask lines. Typically, each mask line offers multiple sizes, including petite, small, medium and large. However, some masks offer extra small, small wide, large wide and extra large. Although masks try to offer as many sizes as there are faces, it does tend to inject confusion into the mask choice. Once a specific CPAP mask manufacturer is decided upon, begin to understand the sizing choices amongst various masks. Every manufacturer does provide sizing templates to aid in properly sizing the mask to the face. It is critical to enlist a knowledgeable professional to assist with mask choice and sizing. The more choices available to you, the greater likelihood a properly fitted mask will be found.

Mask Types

While going through the mask selection process, make yourself knowledgeable about the different styles of masks. Manufacturers continue to add new features and offer better fits to their mask lines. It useful to come prepared to the fitting with your preferred style and mask type in mind. Of course, you will narrow your choices if you have requirements caused by mouth breathing, facial hair, or a deviated septum. To assist, the list of CPAP masks categories is below:
• **CPAP Nasal Masks** – Nasal masks are the most common interface. They cover just the nose, and are triangular in shape. Nasal masks typically have a forehead piece, which aids in stabilizing the mask during sleep. These masks have a variety of cushions, including gel-filled, silicone, air-filled and even dual-walled. The cushion lies against the face and the mask is synched with a headgear, which typically connects at the base of the mask and the forehead assembly. Nasal CPAP masks work best for those who sleep with their mouths closed and are able to breathe through their nose without issue. However, a chinstrap can be used to alleviate mouth breathing.

![Philips Respironics EasyLife Nasal Mask](image)

• **Nasal Pillow CPAP Mask** – Nasal pillow masks have gained great popularity recently primarily due to minimal facial contact, simplicity and comfort. Although nasal pillow masks can work well with nearly all CPAP users, they work exceptionally well for people who have a thin or narrow nose bridge or short face and have difficulty with nasal mask fit. Since there is no forehead assembly, these masks work well for reading or watching television prior to sleep. It also helps to alleviate any mask-induced sore spots and issues with claustrophobia.
• **Full Face CPAP Masks** – Full face masks cover both the nose and mouth and are prescribed for CPAP users who have difficulty breathing out of their nose. This could be caused by a simple allergy or cold or as severe as a deviated septum. They are larger and more cumbersome than other masks but are effective with mouth breathers. Although some full face masks are designed without a forehead assembly, the majority have a forehead piece to stability the mask for active sleepers. A few full face masks are also designed to rest under the chin for added stability. Some users find full face masks somewhat claustrophobic. Once that sensation is overcome, a full face mask is an excellent solution for mouth breathers.
Check for a mask that has a different type of cushion. The CPAP mask cushion is designed not only to stop air leakage, but for comfort. However, some styles may cause the mask to create sore spots or pressure points that are continually aggravated with regular usage. There are masks with adjustable forehead pads, inflatable cushions, and low profile masks designed for eyeglass wearers. A newer type of mask has a soft foam-like material similar to memory foam that conforms to the users face, and a sliding feature that allows the headgear to move during sleep while the mask remains in place.

Another mask type available has a gel material, which also molds to the users face for comfort. One style of gel mask features a wire that allows the wearer to bend and shape the mask to the desired shape; another has an inflatable cushion that can be adjusted for comfort while preventing air leaks.

No single mask is appropriate for everyone. Mask choice is a highly personal decision based purely on fit and comfort. It also is worthwhile to have multiple masks in order to alleviate specific pressure points. Switching from one mask to another every other week could be a simple solution to soreness.

Final Adjustment

When a mask is decided upon, it is best to give it a trial run prior to actually using it during sleep. Make sure it’s understood how the mask sits on the face, how it clips and unclips for easy removal and how the headgear is tightened. In fact, it is ideal to put the mask on and lay in bed as you would normally sleep. Roll from side to side and feel how the mask moves while active. Turn the machine on and experience how the mask feels with air pressure coming through the CPAP tube. For dual cushion masks, pull the mask away from the face slightly to allow for the cushion to inflate. It is important to understand that a mask is made to seal properly without much tightening. Be aware that the mask should fit snugly, but should not be overly tight. If the mask is pulled tightly to seal, it will begin to ache and cause soreness. At that point, it’s time for a new mask cushion or an entire mask.

No CPAP Mask is Perfect, but…

Guiding your mask decision on fit and comfort as opposed to price is a good rule of thumb. It is also recommended to try on as many masks as possible. Certainly, you will see reviews and get suggestions from equipment suppliers, family and friends. But unless they are an identical twin, that mask suggestion
might not be right for your face. In the end, there is no perfect mask, as all leak periodically, especially for active sleepers. Do not worry about periodic, small leaks, as many CPAP machines have leak compensation sensors which adequately increase pressure in case of a leak. Enlist the help of your CPAP equipment provider, and do not settle until the best option is found. Keep in mind that a comfortable and properly fitted CPAP mask can turn a poor CPAP experience into a one you can’t sleep without.

**CPAP Mask Comparison Guide**


ResMed continues to reinvent and improve upon the Swift line of masks. Some veteran CPAP users will remember that when the original ResMed Swift hit the market, it took off like wildfire. Nasal pillow masks were relatively new, and ResMed brought the Swift to market at the perfect time. Although the original Swift was quite popular, some adjustments were needed, as noise was one of the biggest complaints of the original Swift.

What followed was the Swift II. The upgraded Swift II addressed the noise issue with a 50% reduction. With little serious competition, the Swift II again claimed the nasal pillow throne. Today, ResMed has three different masks in their Swifts line: the Swift II, Swift LT and the Swift FX. With all these Swifts available, users wonder which Swift CPAP mask to choose. Since this is a personal choice, and there is no true correct answer, we will profile each mask in hopes of bringing some clarity to the situation.

**ResMed Swift II**

The [ResMed Swift II](#) has had quite a run, as many people switched from traditional nasal CPAP masks to the Swift II when it was released. The Swift II offered minimal facial contact and an unobstructed line of vision when compared to the typical nasal mask. The nasal pillow, which rises slightly into the nostril, is held stable by a small cylinder, or “barrel,” which rests just below the nose. The most significant difference with the Swift II from the other Swift masks is the barrel design that allows the CPAP tube to be positioned to the right or left. This positioning is helpful especially if you tend to sleep on one side, as the tube can be positioned to the opposite side. The tube can also be run up or down depending on preference. The Swift II’s minimal design and lightweight feel (2.5 ounces) offers the CPAP user a comfortable and simple CPAP therapy experience. One drawback derived from user feedback is the buckle at the back of the head. Although not a big issue for most, some users consider the buckle uncomfortable when lying on their backs. Nevertheless, the mask consistently gets high marks from users.
ResMed Swift LT

ResMed continued to improve upon the Swift platform by creating the next generation Swift LT. The ResMed Swift LT has all of the attributes CPAP users like about the Swift II, including some strategic design changes. For example, ResMed continued with the minimal, lightweight design (2.3 ounces) while improving upon its quietness. One major change from the Swift II is a departure from the barrel design. The Swift LT’s delivery system is much more compact at approximately 50% smaller than the Swift II, making it ideal for side sleepers. In fact, the tubing connects directly in the middle of the barrel and rotates 360°, allowing for sleeping in all positions comfortably. The improved nasal pillows are dual-walled and sit on a flexible base, allowing vertical and lateral movement without compromising seal. The nasal pillows are designed to reduce dryness by limiting the volume of air entering the nostrils. In addition, the outer pillow inflates with air while the inner pillow offers soft, stable support. The headgear design was also improved. However, the buckle at the back of the head, albeit smaller, is still incorporated into the design. To appeal to women, ResMed’s Swift LT for Her has pink headgear and an extra small nasal pillow. Overall, the improvements to the Swift LT have provided users with an enhanced CPAP experience and given them a reason to upgrade from the Swift II.

ResMed Swift FX

The latest and greatest in the Swift arsenal is the ResMed Swift FX. Although some would say it would be difficult to improve upon one of the best selling masks, the Swift FX has essentially brought nasal pillow masks to another level. ResMed has listened to all the positive and negative comments from the previous Swift CPAP masks and tried to create something nearly perfect. ResMed added just enough improvement and reduced a few parts to make the Swift FX the most popular nasal pillow mask on the market today. For starters, the headgear is more strategically placed and softer to the face. ResMed has also removed the strap buckle from behind the head. Its flexible and fluid design follows facial contours and movements promoting early acceptance of CPAP therapy. The enhanced dual walled cushions and flexible cushion base provide for a stable user interface even at high pressures and the lightweight tubing helps to reduce pull on the mask. A set of soft wraps and small, medium and large nasal pillows are
provided in the package to improve comfort and increase compliance. ResMed continues to try to appeal to women by offering a Swift FX for Her with pink headgear and smaller nasal pillows. To add to the Swift FX’s comfort factor, a barrel cozy can be purchased separately that helps with condensation and increases comfort. We have seen the Swift FX flying off the shelves and continue to receive nothing but excellent reviews from nearly all CPAP users.

ResMed Swift FX

Although the ResMed Swift II, Swift LT and Swift FX are not the only nasal pillow CPAP masks on the market, they consistently receive high marks in comfort, ease of use and quietness. The Swift FX, in particular, has been a benefit to CPAP users looking to replace their traditional nasal CPAP mask with something more comfortable and lightweight.
Philips Respironics TrueBlue and ResMed’s Mirage SoftGel

Nasal CPAP gel masks have been available for quite some time. Certainly, Philips Respironics with their Profile Lite and Comfort Gel are the two most popular gel masks on the market today. ResMed has generally utilized their non-gel, dual-walled cushion technology on their mask line and provided nasal CPAP mask users an excellent alternative. However, technology marches forward and both Philips Respironics and ResMed have added new nasal CPAP gel masks to their line which have dramatically improved all the aspects CPAP mask users crave: comfort, weight, quietness, convenience, usability and durability.

Philips Respironics new TrueBlue nasal CPAP mask has been very well received after getting high praise from focus groups and sleep technicians. The mask incorporates some of the best technologies available and adds intuitive design functionality. The first noticeably different aspect of the TrueBlue is the soft silicone spring, which connects the mask frame to the cushion. By utilizing the new spring technology, the TrueBlue allows for more movement during sleep by creating a consistent seal and less leakage. A good seal helps to eliminate sleep disturbances and waking while using a CPAP. The TrueBlue cushion is also unique for Philips Respironics. The inner blue gel cushion is enclosed with a “form-fitting outer silicone membrane,” which helps to create a very effective seal. Moreover, the inner gel cushion is quite thin and light, which provides for a more comfortable user experience.

The forehead arm and pad are also a slight departure from Philips Respironics’ normal design. Three soft forehead pads disperse pressure and reduce specific forehead pressure points that occur with other masks. The contoured arm is effective in keeping the mask in place while further reducing any significant forehead pressure. Angled exhalation micro ports help to redirect air away from bed partners.

Finally, the headgear has been redesigned to include inlaid adjustable straps that “converge into a single back panel with a crown strap for added stability.” The new Talon clips that attach the headgear to the mask frame provide both an effective way to lock the mask in place as well as an easy release to remove the mask quickly.

Overall, the TrueBlue mask is innovative and effective in meeting the needs of nasal CPAP mask users. Through testing and feedback, users have given it high marks on comfort, quality, usability and design.
Philips Respironics TrueBlue Nasal Mask

ResMed’s entrance into the nasal CPAP gel mask market is the **Mirage SoftGel**. ResMed, a company known for making high quality CPAP masks, has taken some of their effective mask designs applications and incorporated them into the SoftGel. The most noticeable design feature on the SoftGel is the unique double gel cushion. The outer gel cushion is very soft and pliable, which provides a comfortable feel, while the inner blue gel supplies a stable and supportive interface. The primary difference between the SoftGel and other gel masks is that the outer shell is also gel-filled. This provides additional support for users who move a great deal while sleeping.

The other defining feature of the ResMed SoftGel is the MicroFit dial. This technology has been used on other ResMed masks and shown to be quite effective in creating an optimal fit and increasing comfort levels and seals. The 360° elbow allows for users to move while sleeping without being forced to untangle themselves from the CPAP tube.

Conveniently, ResMed built the SoftGel frame to allow a nasal CPAP mask user to switch from the gel cushion to a similar silicone cushion. In particular, the SoftGel mask frame can be utilized with the SoftGel cushion or the Mirage Activa LT cushion. The Activa LT cushion is a dual-wall, non-gel cushion that applies ResMed’s patented ActiveCell technology for a great fit on a range of facial features. The SoftGel’s diffused airport directly on the mask swivel diffuses air quietly and away for bed partners. ResMed has also incorporated their popular “set and forget” headgear clips and quick release swivel, which are convenient for connecting and disconnecting the CPAP mask.

As typical with ResMed’s mask line, quality is a constant. The mask is well made, functional and provides the user with a high level of comfort. Although the forehead pad falls a bit short when compared to the True Blue, the SoftGel is effective alternative to their non-gel cushion masks.
Finding the perfect mask requires patience, persistence and a willingness to try new things. Each of these masks is worthy of consideration, especially when considering gel-style masks. However, once the perfect fitting mask is found, comfort, compliance and an all around better quality of life will follow. At The CPAP Shop, we strive to bring you products we trust. If you have additional questions, we are happy to discuss them with you.

Which ResMed Full Face CPAP Mask is Best for You?

If you’ve been diagnosed with Sleep Apnea, you are undoubtedly trying to narrow the choice of masks. If your mouth opens during sleep, one option would be a full face CPAP mask. The full face CPAP mask is used to deliver pressure through both the nose and mouth. With the number of full face masks growing, trying to decide which full face CPAP mask to use can be complex and expensive. Based upon comfort, fit, good seal, and durability, ResMed full face CPAP masks can meet nearly every need.

ResMed Quattro FX

The ResMed Quattro FX is the newest mask in the ResMed full face mask line. It has come with plenty of fanfare due to its clear line of sight and feeling of openness. Because the Quattro FX starts mid-way on the nasal bridge, it does not block your view. Without a forehead support, it gives the user the ability to read or watch television normally. Moreover, the Quattro FX frame is smaller, which makes side sleeping more comfortable.

Stability of the mask comes primarily from the dual walled, spring air cushion, flexible frame and new headgear design. Both the cushion and frame mold well to facial features while the contoured crown strap provides support but avoids sensitive areas around the face and neck. The Quattro FX has proven to be an innovative and highly successful next generation full face mask for ResMed.
ResMed Ultra Mirage Full Face

The ResMed Ultra Mirage full face mask has been around for years and still proves to be a top performer. This mask utilizes a one-piece silicone cushion that surrounds the nose and mouth and is positioned from the nose bridge to just under your bottom lip. A standard 4-point headstrap keeps the mask securely fixed to the face. The Ultra Mirage also has a silicone forehead support pad with four adjustment positions to help optimize comfort and fit. In talking to many CPAP users, this mask has an effective seal even at CPAP pressures of 17cmH2o through 20cmH2o.

Parts are also readily available for the Ultra Mirage. As with any CPAP mask, the silicone cushion and headgear should be replaced every 6 to 8 months in order to keep the seal effective. If your CPAP pressure is higher than average and you are struggling to find an acceptable mask, the Ultra Mirage is an respectable choice.

ResMed Mirage Quattro Full Face

The Mirage Quattro is ResMed's fourth generation full face mask and has quickly become a favorite among full face users. Although a few ounces heavier than the Ultra Mirage, the Quattro delivers a more customized experience. The two similarities between Ultra Mirage and the Quattro are the standard 4-point headgear and cushion placement on your face. A nice upgrade from the Ultra Mirage is with respect to the forehead assembly, which ResMed terms the Micro dial. By turning the forehead Micro Dial, it allows users to easily and quickly adjust the forehead support for a personalized fit. The Mirage Quattro's MicroFit dial offers a choice of 24 positions on the forehead support to suit nearly every individual facial structure.
The second important upgrade from the Ultra Mirage to the Quattro is the cushion itself. The Quattro utilizes a dual-wall cushion that resembles a flexible spring. The mask's Spring Air™ cushion technology accommodates movement during sleep and provides an effective solution for jaw drop. We have also had many CPAP users comment on the quietness of this mask. The improved vent design helps softly disperse the air. Like the Ultra Mirage Full Face mask, the silicone cushion and the headgear are readily available for replacement.

ResMed Mirage Quattro Full Face Mask

ResMed Mirage Liberty

The Mirage Liberty is a unique full face mask that seals individually at the mouth and nose using nasal pillows. The cushion that covers the mouth uses the same spring air technology as the Quattro. The soft dual wall silicone nasal pillows are slightly inserted into the nose to provide airflow. Because there is no forehead pad or assembly, the Liberty utilizes a truly unobtrusive design with a clear field of vision. If you have any discomfort with a full face mask such as the Quattro and Ultra Mirage, the non-claustrophobic features of the Liberty could be a good option. This mask is also offered with multiple sizes all included with the mask package, which takes the guesswork out of deciding which size nasal pillow and cushion to purchase.
In Conclusion

ResMed provides excellent choices for people who require a full face CPAP mask. All four full face CPAP masks make use of a standard size tube opening, which means there is no extra tubing adapter required. The tubing supplied with your CPAP machine will work effectively as well. CPAP therapy will only be effective with continued use, and using a full face CPAP mask that is comfortable and fits securely is essential. Hopefully, we have provided some insight and guidance into the full face options provided by ResMed and offered by The CPAP Shop.

Women and Sleep Apnea: CPAP Masks for Women

Until recently, obstructive sleep apnea was considered a male dominated disease. In general, older males are twice as likely as females to develop sleep apnea. However, typical male attributes associated with aging, such as excess weight, neck circumference, high blood pressure, and diabetes, which contribute to high incidents of sleep apnea, are now becoming common among women.

In fact, approximately 7 million women have been diagnosed with sleep apnea and women after menopause are three times more likely to suffer from it. Women who snore are about twice as likely to have high blood pressure and have been linked to a higher risk of depression. Women who snore regularly are 33 percent more likely to suffer from stroke and heart disease than women who don’t snore. Moreover, obstructive sleep apnea is more likely to go undiagnosed in women than in men.

If you experience any obvious signs or symptoms of obstructive sleep apnea, testing is of critical importance. Because snoring also affects partners, it is important to discuss the subject with a significant other in order to help identify additional symptoms. The benefits of treating sleep apnea are dramatic and contribute to higher quality of life.
Women and CPAP Masks

With the occurrence of sleep apnea among women rising, more information and equipment is now available on the subject. Manufacturers have begun to take notice of the rise and have been designing masks specific to women. Since the CPAP mask is the single most personal aspect of CPAP equipment, it makes sense that a CPAP mask be designed specifically for a woman’s features and likes.

ResMed, a leading CPAP equipment manufacturer, has taken a big step forward in the women Sleep Apnea market by offering a few new CPAP mask choices; The Swift™ FX for Her and the Swift™ LT for Her. Each of these products offers a contemporary design with a woman in mind. Philips Respironics has also entered the niche with the GoLife for Women while Fisher and Paykel HealthCare have also offered two CPAP nasal masks geared toward women; FlexiFit™ 406 Petite and Zest™ Nasal CPAP Masks.

The Swift™ LT for Her was the initial CPAP mask designed specifically for woman. ResMed took the highly successful Swift LT and tweaked it with personalized features for women’s unique preferences.

Some of the more important features for women include nasal pillow sizes including extra small, small and medium, adjustable backstrap that can be worn over or under the hair to accommodate a wide range of hairstyles and headgear stability arms with soft wraps that are expandable to accommodate various facial widths, including narrow or wider faces, to minimize facial contact or pressure marks. The look was also softened with a more feminine print and light blue headgear design.

The Swift™ FX for Her has drawn on the strengths of the Swift LT for Her. The Swift FX for Her is lighter, softer and even more streamlined. ResMed has mounted a 360° rotating elbow for flexibility in tube positions and additional buckle notches that allow for customized sizing for women’s fitting needs. Some design features specific to women’s needs include a low-profile backstrap with Velcro fasteners available in small sizes and in pink or light blue and gray. Soft wraps enhance comfort at the cheeks and are also available in gray and pink to coordinate with the backstrap. Finally, to better fit female users, pillow sizes come packaged with extra small, small and medium.
Philips Respironics GoLife for Women is a platform built around a simple concept: the fewer parts the better. With only three parts – nasal pillow, headgear and tubing – it is very simple to maintain and replace parts. The soft facial contour arms hug the cheekbones to maintain stability and secure the seal. The self-adjusting nasal pillows eliminate the need for much manual adjustment. The improved exhalation port quietly diffuses air making the mask unnoticeable to bed partners. Overall, the GoLife for Women is tailored specifically toward the features of women by incorporating smaller nasal pillows and headgear to provide a more comfortable and natural fit.
Fisher & Paykel have also entered into the growing female market with FlexiFit 406 and Zest CPAP nasal mask. Both CPAP nasal masks offer solutions specifically designed to fit finer featured faces. The Petite design is small, light and easy to use. The Stretchgear Headgear provides comfort and the maintenance-free bias diffuser ensures a quieter operation. The Zest offers a compact, quiet, and effortless to fit and use solution. The innovative design of the Zest Nasal Mask combines easy-clip silicone seal, Flexifoam Cusion technology and advanced air diffuser for ease of use, comfort and quietness. The Zest™, which comes in petite, is a good solution for the small facial features of female CPAP users.

Fisher & Paykel FlexiFit 406

It is apparent that woman's health issues are becoming prominent enough for major manufacturer’s to focus on products geared specifically for female users. CPAP supplies and equipment are no different. As shown, ResMed, Philips Respironics and Fisher & Paykel have taken steps to help alleviate the problems associated with CPAP masks for women. More comfort, smaller sizes and feminine colors are all aspects they have thought about when designing female specific CPAP masks. As more are diagnosed and the market continues to expand, the number of CPAP masks for women will also increase and become more than a niche product.
CPAP Mask Parts and Troubleshooting

Yes, You Can Buy Parts for Your CPAP Mask

Buying parts for CPAP masks is an affordable way to keep your mask fitting comfortably without the expense of purchasing an entirely new mask. Although it makes economic sense to purchase parts, masks that are beyond their useful lives should be replaced.

Finding the perfect fitting mask is difficult enough. It is important to follow a routine for keeping your mask disinfected and ready for use on a daily basis. Unfortunately, even the most disciplined users find that over time their CPAP mask just doesn’t feel as comfortable and fresh as when it was purchased. Most often, the CPAP mask cushion begins to degrade and the headgear stretches, making for a much less comfortable mask. If it’s just the parts that have lost their resilience, why purchase an entirely new mask if you can replace a few parts?

Purchasing an entirely new CPAP mask can cost upwards of $150.00 for a full face mask. Purchasing the parts to a mask can range anywhere from $10 to $50. Manufacturers are now seeing the benefits of providing parts and are making parts readily available for their CPAP mask lines. In fact, many CPAP users chose their mask based on the availability of parts. As long as the mask has not been used beyond its useful life, buying parts is a cost effective and practical approach for making your CPAP mask feel like new.

The Philips Respironics ComfortGel Blue nasal mask has been redesigned from the original CPAP mask, and continues to be among our top sellers. Many people are quite familiar with the blue colored gel cushion that surrounds the nose and molds to your face. The heat from your face and natural skin oils will eventually wear down the integrity of this cushion. You will begin to find yourself tightening the headgear straps, which will cause more pronounced strap marks on your face. This is just the point where it would be useful to inquire with your supplier about replacement parts for your particular mask. Your supplier should have a complete list of all parts available for this and any mask.

ComfortGel Blue Cushion

The CPAP Shop | www.TheCPAPShop.com | 866-414-9700 | customersupport@thecpapshop.com
Instead of purchasing the entire mask, it makes sense to replace just that specific part. It is as simple as removing the old cushion and carefully replacing it with a new cushion. The headgear, which may stretch or fray over time, can also be purchased for nearly every mask available. Purchasing new CPAP head straps will save you enough money over time to purchase a back up CPAP mask. Over time, this method of buying parts can save a considerable amount of money.

The savings become even more apparent when purchasing parts for the more expensive full face masks. For example, ResMed's Quattro FX full face CPAP mask has many replaceable parts, from the CPAP mask elbow assembly to the CPAP mask cushion and headgear. The savings will quickly add up and you will find yourself sleeping better because the mask will feel like new. This will also significantly increase compliance, which is key to CPAP therapy. We speak to hundreds of CPAP users per week, and often times replacing just one part, such as the head strap can create a more comfortable CPAP experience and allow users to optimize the value of their purchase.

Keep in mind that any part that comes in contact with your skin will eventually break down and become ineffective. Choosing a CPAP mask with replaceable parts can be an effective money-saving strategy. Cushions tend to have a life expectancy of 3-6 months, so watch for our specials that include an additional cushion with a mask purchase. Establish a daily cleaning routine and keep track of how many weeks elapse until your cushion, headgear, and forehead pads feel worn down. When this is determined, create a regular ordering cycle to ensure proper fitting and comfort. This will insure sleeping will not be interrupted due to an uncomfortable CPAP mask.

ResMed Quattro FX Full Face

The CPAP Shop      |  www.TheCPAPShop.com  |  866-414-9700  |  customersupport@thecpapshop.com
Solving CPAP Mask Problems:  
Getting the Right Fit on a CPAP Mask

A CPAP mask is one of the most important pieces of CPAP equipment you'll use, and also the trickiest to use correctly. Many doctors and sleep therapists who see thousands of patients will tell you that the number one CPAP therapy complaint is mask fit. Your machine is only one part of CPAP therapy—your mask is more important because it's what you'll be wearing on your face every single night. Comfort is very important, with the biggest issue being properly fitting the mask to your face shape. The mask should feel comfortable and secure when you're sitting upright and when reclining in a sleeping position. It is important to test the mask while sitting upright and lying down and at various pressures in order to ensure a good fit without leaks. Additionally, try shifting in ways you would normally move during sleep—side to side and on your stomach—to ensure the mask remains in place, adjusting the headgear and checking for leaks.

Steps to Getting the Proper Fit on a CPAP Mask:

If it is the first time you're fitting a CPAP mask, do so during the daylight hours and before you become tired. You'll need to re-adjust the mask a few times before it fits properly and you grow accustomed to it.

• Ensure that all straps are as loose as possible.

• Hold the mask up to your nose and connect the headgear to the proper locations. It helps to do this step in front of a mirror.

• Make sure the CPAP mask is properly placed on the nose bridge, using any adjustment straps to adjust its location. Gently pull for a secure fit. Make sure the mask is snug but not overly tight. A common problem is over-tightening, be sure the mask is just secure enough to create a proper seal.

• If the mask is too tight, the silicone cushion that creates the seal can “fold over” on itself, giving air places to escape and causing leaks.

• If you have long hair, hold it up in a ponytail while putting on the mask. Once secure, let your hair down over the back headgear.

• Finally, turn on the CPAP machine to make sure there are no leaks. If so, it’s best to start over. The time spent getting the right fit will provide a more comfortable, overall CPAP experience.

My CPAP Mask is Leaking:

If your CPAP mask is leaking, there are several steps you can take to solve the problem. Remember it is important for the mask to be snug but not tight. Firstly, readjust the headgear and make sure the cushion is properly set. If your CPAP mask headgear has a chinstrap band, check to make sure it’s not too tight, as it might pull the mask downward. If your CPAP mask has nasal pillows, rotate the nose cushions or try a different size to help secure the fit.
It is difficult to get used to wearing a CPAP mask every night. If you find one that works best for you and has been adjusted properly, the benefit will be a great night’s sleep. There are many varieties of CPAP masks and accessories that’ll meet your needs—not everyone sleeps the same way. If you lie on your stomach or if you toss and turn, there’s a CPAP mask that will work for you. If you’re uncomfortable with a CPAP mask that covers your entire face, you may prefer a nose pillow CPAP mask, which has minimal headgear and seals inside the nostrils. Take the time to consult with a knowledgeable source and experiment with CPAP masks and accessories to find the one that works best for you.

**Conclusion**

People are typically averse to change. Unfortunately, if you are diagnosed with sleep apnea, changes in habits and daily regimens will be necessary. Education plays a large factor in accepting the necessary changes to your lifestyle that successful, long-term CPAP therapy requires. Understanding the potential benefits associated with CPAP therapy can be life altering. Being armed with knowledge and understanding and support from loved ones will make the transition to CPAP therapy less frustrating and more meaningful. Our goal at The CPAP Shop is to not only provide you with the most current information but to assist and support you during the transition. We try to make your decisions about CPAP easy!