

Dear Patients:

Please follow these recommendations.

Coronavirus FAQs: CPAP tips for sleep apnea patients

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) Public Safety Committee is responding to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the coronavirus (COVID-19).

The AASM encourages you to follow the CDC tips on how to prepare for the coronavirus. You should discuss your health and medical condition with your local medical provider. View additional FAQs from ResMed about PAP devices and COVID-19. The CDC and WHO also offer general COVID-19 FAQs. Use the Coronavirus Symptom Self-Checker from the CDC.

Do I have a higher risk of getting coronavirus because I have sleep apnea?

It is unclear if sleep apnea causes you to have a higher risk of getting the coronavirus. People who do have a higher risk of the coronavirus include:

- Older adults
- Those who have serious medical disorders. These disorders include
 - Heart disease
 - Diabetes
 - Lung disease
 - Kidney disease
- Those who have a medical disorder, or take a medication, that weakens the immune system.
- Those who have had close contact with another person who has the coronavirus.

If I have symptoms of the coronavirus, should I continue using my CPAP?

If you have the coronavirus, it is important to talk to your medical provider before stopping any medical treatments. It is possible that using CPAP could increase the risk of spreading the virus to others around you. Be sure to talk to your medical provider about this risk.

If you are sick with the coronavirus, you should follow current CDC recommendations:

- Stay home except to get medical care.
- Separate yourself from other people in your home.
- Stay in a specific “sick room.”
- Use a separate bathroom, if one is available.
- Call ahead before visiting your doctor.
- Wear a facemask when you are around other people.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with tissue.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water.

- Avoid sharing dishes, glasses or utensils with others.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces in your “sick room” every day.
- Seek medical care if your illness gets worse. (But call your doctor first.)

If I have the coronavirus, will my CPAP be helpful for my breathing? Or could CPAP cause the coronavirus to get worse?

It is unclear whether CPAP could make the coronavirus worse. But using CPAP could increase the risk of spreading the virus to others around you. Talk to your medical provider about your treatment options for sleep apnea.

If I have the coronavirus, how should I clean and disinfect my CPAP mask and hose?

The CDC recommends that you should clean and disinfect your medical equipment according to the manufacturer’s instructions. The directions for CPAP masks and hoses normally include regular cleaning with soap and water. It is unclear if extra CPAP cleaning is needed due to the coronavirus.

The CDC also recommends that you clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces in your household. This includes door knobs, light switches and handles. Learn more from the CDC about how to clean and disinfect your household.

Distilled water is unavailable in my area. What should I use in my CPAP humidifier?

According to ResMed, “*optimal* humidifier performance requires distilled water. That’s because most or all of its minerals have been removed, preventing mineral buildup in the humidifier tub. That said, tap or bottled water may also be used. It will not harm the device or pose a risk to patients. It will, however, require more rigorous humidifier cleaning to prevent excess mineral buildup in the tub.”

How to clean your CPAP equipment (ResMed)

Time it takes: 5 minutes

Supplies you’ll need for cleaning:

A sink or tub

Warm, drinking-quality water (86°F/30°C)

Mild soap

A clean towel

Cleaning your CPAP mask cushion, frame & headgear

- AirFit series, Swift, Mirage, Quattro and Pixi masks
- AirTouch F20 cushion

Daily cleaning tips:

1. Unplug your CPAP machine from the power source.
2. Disconnect the mask and air tubing from the CPAP machine.
3. Disassemble your mask into 3 parts (headgear, cushion and frame).
4. In a sink or tub, clean your mask cushion and headgear to remove any oils. Gently rub with soap and warm, drinking-quality water. Avoid using stronger cleaning products, including dish detergents, as they may damage the mask or leave harmful residue.
5. Rinse again thoroughly with warm, drinking-quality water.
6. Place the cushion and frame on a flat surface, on top of a towel, to dry. Avoid placing them in direct sunlight.

Air tubing cleaning tips

- ClimateLineAir™ heated tube, SlimLine™, HumdiAir™ heated humidifier and standard tubing

Daily cleaning tips:

1. Unplug your CPAP machine from the power source.
2. Disconnect the air tubing/hose from your mask and CPAP machine.
3. In a sink or tub, rinse the inside and outside of the air tubing with mild soap and warm, drinking-quality water. Avoid using stronger cleaning products, including dish detergents, as they may damage the air tubing or leave harmful residue.
4. Rinse again thoroughly with warm, drinking-quality water.
5. Place the air tubing on a flat surface, on top of a towel, to dry. Avoid placing in direct sunlight.

Humidifier tub cleaning tips

Daily cleaning tips:

1. Unplug your CPAP machine from the power source.
2. Disconnect the humidifier tub from the CPAP machine.
3. In a sink or tub, rinse the humidifier tub with mild soap and warm, drinking-quality water. Avoid using stronger cleaning products, including dish detergents, as they may damage the humidifier tub or leave harmful residue.
4. Rinse again thoroughly with warm, drinking-quality water.
5. Place the humidifier tub on a flat surface, on top of a towel, to dry. Avoid placing in direct sunlight.
6. The humidifier tub should always be clean, clear and free of discoloration.
- 7.

Weekly cleaning tips:

1. Once a week, soak your humidifier tub in a solution of 1-part white vinegar and 1-part water for 15-20 minutes.
2. After soaking, rinse thoroughly with warm, drinking-quality water.
3. Place the humidifier tub on a flat surface, on top of a towel, to dry. Avoid placing in direct sunlight.
- 4.

CPAP cleaning FAQs

What should I NOT use to clean my mask?

We strongly discourage you from using the products/solutions listed below to clean CPAP equipment, as the residual vapors can be harmful if inhaled.

- Aromatic-based solutions or scented oils (e.g. eucalyptus or essential oils)
- Antibacterial soaps
- Dish Detergent (even if they are mild)
- Alcohol
- Bleach
- Strong-smelling products (e.g. soaps with citrus)
- Washing machine or dryer

Why can't I use these products to clean my mask?

Antibacterial soaps, among others, may damage your mask and cause cracks, which may lead to skin irritation and poor mask performance.

The use of a washing machine or dryer to clean CPAP equipment is likely to cause damage and the need for replacement. Never iron headgear, as the material is heat-sensitive and could be damaged.

Which CPAP parts do I need to clean and how often?

Daily:

- Mask cushion
- Air tubing
- Humidifier water tub

Weekly:

- Mask frame system
- Mask headgear