

Keeping Your CPAP Clean

Proper care and maintenance of your CPAP machine can help to ensure the device will function properly. It is vitally important to keep everything as clean as possible. The thorough cleaning of your CPAP machine can be divided into daily and weekly cleaning.

Daily Cleaning

Get in the habit of wiping down your mask (including areas that come in contact with your skin) using a damp towel with mild detergent and warm water. This will remove any oils, dead skin cells and sweat on the mask that can affect the quality of the seal. Gently rinse with a clean towel and let the mask air-dry. You can also use pre-moistened towels or “CPAP Wipe” designed specifically for cleaning CPAP masks, which are available at many sleep centers.

If your unit has a humidifier, empty any leftover water every morning instead of letting it sit in the unit all day. Refill the humidifier with clean, distilled water right before bedtime for optimal use.

If you’ve been sick, it’s smart to wash your mask, tubing, humidifier and filter daily until your cold, flu or virus symptoms are gone. That can help reduce the amount of time you spend sick.

Weekly Cleaning

Your mask, headgear, humidifier water chamber and tubing need a full bath once a week to keep it free of dust, bacteria and germs. Clean these in a sink filled with warm water and a few drops of ammonia-free, mild dish detergent.

Soak all parts and swirl around occasionally for 15 minutes, rinse well and let air dry during the day. Hang the tubing and headgear over the shower rod or on a towel rack to ensure all the water drips out. The mask and humidifier water chamber can be air-dried on a towel. You should also wipe down your CPAP machine with a damp cloth. The towel shouldn’t be too damp or wet, as water could get into the machine.

Clean the reusable filter by removing it and rinsing it in warm tap water. But don’t wash your machine’s disposable filter, if one is present. These should be replaced once a month. Just like your house filters, if the white filter is dirty, it should be replaced sooner than once a month.

Every other week you can disinfect the humidifier by adding a solution of one part vinegar to five parts water to the humidification chamber for 30 minutes and thoroughly rinse. Then soak in a sink filled with warm water and a few drops of ammonia-free, mild dish detergent for 5 minutes, thoroughly rinse and allow to air dry. Keep it clean by using only distilled water to prevent mineral deposits that can build up and cause damage to your machine.

With a little upkeep, your CPAP can continue to help you breathe better for a long time. Just a few minutes a day can help keep your CPAP running efficiently for years to come.

If you have questions regarding your CPAP equipment, please call Principle Polysomnographic Technologist at UCDCM Sleep Laboratory at 916-734-0256.