

Bipap vs Cpap: Which One is Right for you?

CPAP users may have heard the term Bipap but may be confused about how it works and how it differs compared to the basic CPAP machine. There are some differences when it comes to Bipap vs CPAP. The basic CPAP machine delivers a constant stream of air through a tube and into a face mask. This type of constant pressure will help to keep the user's airway open and allow them to breathe normally. Bipap will offer two different levels of air pressure.

Bipap vs CPAP: Differences and Similarities for these Devices

Sleep apnea is a respiratory disorder that's characterized by the interruption of breathing during sleep. This will be caused when a person's air passage becomes narrow and doesn't allow air to pass through. This in turn will cause oxygen levels to dip, causing a person to wake up gasping for air. People who are undergoing treatment for sleep apnea are usually familiar with Bipap and CPAP machines. Each of these machines will make use of positive airway pressure in order to help clear the airway and allow a person to breathe easier at night.



The Bipap machine functions similarly to the CPAP machine when a person inhales, however it differs on the pressure during exhaling. During exhalation, the Bipap machine will deliver a pressure relief or it will drop in pressure in order to allow a patient to breathe more normally. This pressure relief is more noticeable for patients with a prescribed air pressure of fifteen CM or higher, as it will allow them to exhale without breathing against constant strong pressure.

CPAP machines will deliver a predetermined level of air pressure, releasing the compressed air through a hose which is connected to a mask. This continuous pressure will keep the airway open. CPAP machines will also be used for respiratory conditions.

Bipap machines will deliver two levels of air pressure. This type of device is used to treat severe obstructive sleep apnea and central sleep apnea. This machine is also prescribed for people who suffer from heart disease.

The CPAP machine will help by supplying a continuous level of air pressure while the Bipap machine will exert high pressure when the patient breathes in and a lower pressure when the user breathes out. The Bipap machine will reduce the pressure when exhaled, in order to allow the user to breathe more normally.

Bipap machines are designed more for the patient who is suffering from lung diseases such as COPD, while CPAP machines are more beneficial for patients who suffer from severe sleep apnea. CPAP is also significantly more affordable than Bipap machines and will typically be covered by health insurance while the Bipap machine will not.

CPAP devices are much noisier and larger than Bipap machines and it can be more difficult for a patient to relax and sleep through the night.

What Happens after a Sleep Apnea Diagnosis?

If you've been diagnosed with sleep apnea, then the odds are you'll be introduced to at least one of these two possible treatments. The standard treatment for this condition is the use of one of these machines, for the much needed support designed to keep your airway open. Often, CPAP will be more commonly prescribed due to its effectiveness rate, and because this type of machine is covered by insurance. Most patients will turn to Bipap use if they experience difficulty sleeping due the noise the CPAP machine makes or because they have trouble breathing comfortably with the same level of air pressure for inhaling and exhaling. Both of these machines will definitely take some getting used to in the beginning weeks of treatment.



Patients who suffer from the most common form of sleep apnea will usually begin treatment with the CPAP machine. Bipap will only be prescribed for patients who suffer from central sleep apnea or patients who are unable to adjust to the oxygen levels administered by the CPAP device. Central sleep apnea is characterized by pauses in a person's breathing without an obstruction in the airway.

A person will receive a diagnosis for sleep apnea based on the results of a sleep study. The sleep study will be performed at a sleep study center, where professionals will observe a patient while they sleep, or the patient will be given a device to take home which will monitor their breathing

patterns. After wearing this device for two nights the patient will return to the sleep study center to turn in the device.

What Other Devices are Available for Sleep Apnea Treatment?

Aside from Bipap and CPAP machines, there are additional machines that can be prescribed by your sleep specialist. Many of these other machines will have automatic features that offer a range of pressures you can use. There's also a type of bi-level device that can deliver timed breaths. Lastly, there is another type of sophisticated device called adaptive or auto servo ventilation that offers even more features in order to maintain normal breathing patterns during sleep.

Typically, the right type of machine for you will be based on your specific needs, lung capacity, comfort level and breathing patterns. Trial and error will play a big part when it comes to finding a machine that will allow you to sleep more comfortably while also assisting in keeping your airways open. Your sleep specialist will be able to determine your needs based on the results of a sleep study and an assessment. You should discuss your options at your visit and speak with your physician if you experience any difficulty sleeping after beginning treatment.

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Choosing a CPAP Chin Strap

A CPAP chin strap will often be used by apnea sufferers who awaken with dry mouth. Dry mouth is caused when a person sleeps with their mouth wide open. Sleeping with the mouth open will not only cause you to snore but it will also make CPAP therapy less effective. If you snore and it interrupts your sleep, or if you have other signs of sleep apnea such as falling asleep frequently throughout the day, feeling depressed or irritable, morning headaches or daytime sleepiness then you'll need to consult a sleep specialist for an assessment.

How a CPAP Chin Strap Can Help

For most apnea sufferers a CPAP chin strap will stop the escaping air, or help to dramatically reduce it. This will mean little or no dry mouth and a more peaceful sleep. When you wear a chin strap, it will act like a sling that will serve to hold the jaw firmly in place. The mouth will remain closed and the forward position of the jaw will reduce the risk of the throat tissues and tongue falling back to block your airway.



If you've been diagnosed with apnea and are prescribed CPAP therapy, your physician may ask you to also use the CPAP chin strap. Using the CPAP machine will force air into your throat through the use of a mask and the pressure of the air flow, which will keep the airway open. If you normally sleep with your mouth open, this can prove to be counterproductive, as the air that enters through your nose will escape through your mouth. This will worsen sleep apnea. A chin strap is one of the simplest anti-snoring devices you can use. However, if this device proves to be ineffective then your physician may instead prescribe a different style of CPAP mask.

Different Styles of Sleep Apnea Chin Straps

You will need to consider how you sleep before you decide to purchase a chin strap. If you frequently toss and turn at night, the strap may slide out of place. The strap will be more effective if it remains in position throughout the night. There are some types of straps that feature a sling like device and will have wider and longer straps. This style of strap will remain in place without sliding off, compared to other styles that feature compact straps.

Many people who suffer from sleep apnea often go undiagnosed. What a person thinks of as snoring may actually be a form of apnea. In cases such as these, wearing a chin strap that's designed for anti-snoring purposes can actually contribute to low oxygen levels that are caused by apnea and this can be dangerous. For the best results, speak with your specialist, who will be able to recommend a style and size that's right for you.

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How you can determine if you need a Sleep Apnea Pillow

A sleep apnea pillow is designed to help a person suffering from sleep apnea to sleep more comfortably on their side. In certain cases, sleeping on the side can contribute to enhancing sleep

respiratory function. Your sleeping posture can be the most efficient change that's needed in order to effectively treat sleep apnea, depending on the type of apnea you suffer from.

The Right Type of Sleep Apnea Pillow

If you suffer from sleep apnea, then you're probably researching what type of sleep apnea pillow can allow you to rest comfortably on your side. There are a few factors you should take into consideration when choosing the right kind, such as whether you snore, the type of sleep apnea you have and if you have mild or moderate sleep apnea.



During sleep, avoid lying on your back. Ask your bed partner if you still snore if you sleep on your side. If you sleep alone you can use a night vision camera or an audio recorder to record your sleep. Also note whether you feel better in the morning after having slept on your side.

Positional therapy will be useless for the patient who suffers from mixed sleep apnea or central sleep apnea. You'll need to undergo a sleep study in order to determine the exact problems you experience during sleep.

Sleeping on your side will be effective if you suffer from a mild or moderate form of obstructive sleep apnea. Again, you'll need to undergo a sleep study in order to determine the severity of your apnea. During the sleep study it will be determined whether or not positional therapy will be an effective form of treatment.

The Best Brands of Pillows for Sleep Apnea

There are a number of pillows that can help to improve your sleeping experience, such as the Oxygen pillow, the Better Sleep pillow, Tempur-pedic Swedish neck pillows or the PA pillow. Regardless of the type of pillow you choose, your airway will be greatly influenced by your head position. This is why contour pillows can help a person with apnea to sleep better and uninterrupted. These pillows work by supporting the neck while also keeping the top of the head lower than the neck. You can also mimic this effect when sleeping on you back by using a log pillow or simply rolling up a towel. Other pillows designed to treat sleep apnea are designed to be used in conjunction with a CPAP or Bipap machine. These pillows will allow you to

comfortably rest on your side without the worry of the pillow interfering with the mask and CPAP device. The cost for one of these pillows will vary by brand and design and can have a price that ranges from \$40 to \$100. Some health insurance companies will cover the cost of a pillow, based on the type of sleep apnea you suffer from and recommendations from your sleep specialist.

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The Most Effective CPAP Alternatives

Over twenty million Americans suffer from sleep apnea, which will cause a person to constantly awaken during the night due to pauses in their breathing. For many years the standard sleep apnea treatment was the use of a CPAP machine. This involves wearing a mask over your nose and mouth and breathing in a steady flow of air, which is delivered by the CPAP device. These days, CPAP alternatives are more commonly used because of the difficulty most patients experience when using the CPAP machine.

Recommended CPAP Alternatives

New CPAP alternatives include nasal attachments, devices that will suck the tongue forward and implants.

For many patients with apnea, during sleep the tongue and soft palate will relax and block the airway, causing the blood oxygen levels to drop. This will cause a person to jolt awake. This can happen several times during the night and results in a person feeling exhausted throughout their day.



The CPAP alternative involving surgical implants is by far the most invasive form of treatment for sleep apnea. These devices will keep the airway open during sleep by stimulating the hypoglossal nerves. The devices are surgically implanted in the chest. One device will extend to the middle of the chest and the other will extend up to the neck and encase the hypoglossal

nerve. While sleeping, the device electrically stimulates the nerve. A patient will use a remote control to turn the device on or off.

Another CPAP alternative is a device known as Provent. These devices are inserted into the nostrils and feature tiny valves that open when the user breathes in and closes when they exhale. This will create pressure that props open the airway. The price for a month's supply is around seventy dollars and the cost is usually not covered by health insurance. This type of treatment isn't effective for patients who breathe through their mouth.

The device designed to fit over the tongue is very small and will gently fit over the tip of the tongue. While you sleep, your tongue will relax and slide backwards, blocking your airway. This device will gently pull your tongue forward, allowing for air to easily move through your airway.

Another alternative is the use of the Bipap machine, which features two different air levels instead of the one level offered by the CPAP machine. Bipap machines are often more expensive than CPAP models and will not usually be covered by health insurance.

Using Your CPAP Machine

Over the years CPAP machines have improved as manufacturers come out with smaller devices that are quieter and masks that fit better. Older models were too noisy, making it difficult to fall asleep. The type of mask you choose will play a part in how successful this type of treatment is for you. If you're prescribed CPAP therapy, be sure that you speak with your sleep specialist regarding the type of mask that's right for you.

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