Our Lady’s Children’s Hospital, 
Crumlin

Looking after your CPAP
mask, headgear, humidifier and tubing

If you have any queries or if the CPAP machine or supplies break or malfunction please call Your Home Health Care Company First.

How do I look after the machine?

Daily cleaning:
1. Remove any visible dirt from the mask with a damp cloth
2. If using a humidifier the water should be changed every day

Weekly Cleaning:
1. Check filter. If it is dusty then wash it in warm soapy water and allow to dry completely before putting it back in the machine
2. CPAP mask, headgear, humidifier and tubing
   The mask, headgear, humidifier chamber and tubing should be washed weekly in warm soapy water. Some masks may need to be taken apart to allow for thorough cleaning. The tube can be hung over a door to help the water drain from the tube and to allow it to dry.
   Hot water could damage your mask and tubing so only use warm soapy water when washing.
   If there is a build-up of lime scale, then a solution of 1 part vinegar to 10 parts water can be used to remove the lime scale. Some humidifiers can be cleaned in the dishwasher but please read the manufacturers guidelines for your device before doing this. Your CPAP provider will also be able to advise you on how best to clean the different components of your machine
3. The outer casing of the CPAP device can be cleaned with a damp cloth

Mask fit:
If the mask doesn’t fit properly or is applied incorrectly it can lead to skin breakdown over time. The mask should rest on the face and the straps adjusted so that the mask fit is snug. If a leak is present then tightening the straps further may exacerbate the problem. It is better to take the mask off and reposition it before you start tightening the straps. Once you have adjusted the mask so that there are no leaks and it is comfortable to wear then when you take it off in the morning it can be easier to just release one of the straps so that you don’t have to be adjusting the straps each night.
Skin Irritation:

Some patients may suffer from dry skin. Scented moisturisers and petroleum based moisturisers eg Vaseline should be avoided as they may damage the mask. Aqueous cream can be used instead. When the mask is removed there may be some red marks on the face but these should fade quickly. Marks that don’t fade are a sign that the mask/headgear isn’t fitting correctly. If the skin has broken down completely then you may need to change to a different type of mask or you may need to stop wearing your CPAP for a night or two to allow the skin to heal. The most common sites for skin breakdown are the bridge of the nose and occasionally the cheeks. There are a variety of tapes which can be used to provide an extra layer of protection between the mask and the skin. Your Respiratory Consultant will be able to advise you about this. If you feel that your child has outgrown there mask, then please contact your CPAP provider and they will call out to your home and check the mask size/fit.