PAP DESENSITIZATION

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- Sleep apnea is a condition where you stop breathing repetitively throughout sleep. Positive airway pressure (PAP) delivers prescribed amounts of pressurized air to treat sleep apnea. This air acts as an "air splint" to keep your upper airway open during sleep. The goal is to use PAP every time you are asleep, including nighttime sleep and naps.

- Expect to "work" with your PAP unit. It is important to try to relax when beginning PAP therapy. Inhalation and exhalation should occur through the nose only. If you are unable to consistently breathe this way, do not panic or lose hope. There are other types of masks which allow you to breath through your nose and/or your mouth. Don't give up after a few attempts—some people need 3 to 4 weeks (or sometimes longer) to become accustomed to PAP therapy.

- **PAP Desensitization Steps:**
  Start with step 1. When you can perform a step without anxiety, move on to the next step. Try to advance a step every 5 days. During daytime PAP practice, do something distracting and enjoyable, especially when you are first getting started. Examples include watching TV or reading a book.

  1. **Practice wearing just the mask during the day for at least 1 hour every day.**
  2. **Practice wearing with the machine on during the day for at least 1 hour every day.**
     a. Hold the mask.
     b. Turn the machine on.
     c. You can pull the mask off your face if you are uncomfortable.
     d. Once you are comfortable, allow the mask to rest on your face. If you feel uncomfortable, again you can pull the mask an inch or so off your face. Allow the mask to rest again on your face when you feel comfortable.
  3. **Practice wearing with the machine on during the day for at least 2 hours.**
  4. **If you take a nap, use PAP for the nap.**
  5. **Use PAP at night for the first 3-4 hours of nighttime sleep.**
  6. **Use PAP through the entire night of sleep.**

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