

## FACT SHEET: STILL SLEEPY AFTER TREATMENT

### KEY FACTS

- Maintain good sleep habits to optimize your treatment.
- If you are still sleepy for any reason several weeks after starting treatment, contact your physician.
- Weight gain or loss may require adjustments in your PAP pressure.

### Q: I AM STILL SLEEPY EVEN THOUGH I AM WEARING MY CPAP MASK. WHAT COULD THE PROBLEM BE?

**A:** There are many reasons why you may still be tired or sleepy even after being treated for your sleep apnea. Some things you can evaluate and fix on your own while others will require consulting with your physician. Below are five important areas to consider:

#### 1. Sleep hygiene and adequate sleep

Make sure you develop good sleep habits. Good sleep hygiene (habits) will help promote restful sleep so you can function and be alert during the day. Sleep hygiene includes personal and environmental features.

For personal habits try the following:

- Maintain a regular bedtime and wake time every day. Don't allow the time to drift or vary, even on weekends.
- Try to get 7 – 8 hours of sleep every night
- Avoid napping during the day.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine or stimulants and spicy foods at least 4 – 6 hours prior to bedtime.
- Exercise regularly.

For environmental habits try the following:

- Sleep in a comfortable bed and maintain a cool room temperature.
- Avoid watching television in bed.
- Block out all distracting noise and light.
- Reserve the bed for sleep and intimacy only.
- Avoid pets on the bed.

#### 2. Life changes

If you have had a significant weight loss or weight gain recently, your PAP pressures may no longer be adequate to treat your sleep apnea. You should consult with your physician to see if you may need another sleep study. Your physician can download and review the information stored in your PAP machine to determine whether the pressure setting is sufficient to treat your apnea.

Medication changes can also disrupt the quality and quantity of your sleep. If you have recently started a new medication or had changes in dosages prior to feeling sleepy, you should consult with your physician.

Depression or life stressors can disrupt the quality and quantity of your sleep.



**SLEEP DISORDERS  
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### 3. PAP Equipment

When using PAP therapy, the first interface (mask) you try may not be the best one for you. Work with your physician and PAP supplier to make adjustments to your equipment as needed, and also make sure that you are comfortable with your selection.

You may experience other interface issues such as leaks or pressure sores on your nose or face. Address these issues immediately with your physician and PAP supplier so you can continue to use your PAP machine and be comfortable. Air leaking through the mouth can occur when you are sleeping. Symptoms of mouth breathing include waking up with an extremely dry mouth. Some solutions to this would be trying another type of mask or adding a chin strap.

If your PAP interface is causing leaks around the eyes, this should be addressed immediately as this can cause damage to your eyes. Usually, this can be corrected by changing your mask to another size. Avoid over tightening your mask in an effort to alleviate leaks, as this will most certainly cause the leak to worsen.

### 4. Compliance

It is very important that you comply with your PAP therapy in order to treat your sleep apnea and improve your sleep and alertness. Compliance to PAP therapy is very important to treat your sleep apnea and to obtain the rest that is needed to feel awake and alert. To make sure you are compliant do the following:

- Wear your PAP for the entire sleep period even if it is a nap.
- Have your PAP information downloaded regularly and make sure your doctor gets the information. Your PAP supplier can do this or your doctor might be able to do it.
- If you don't have a PAP supplier or sleep physician, try contacting a sleep center close to you for assistance.

### 5. Development of additional sleep disorders

There are over 100 different sleep disorders and it is possible to have more than one. Sometimes other sleep disorders are uncovered after a patient begins PAP therapy, such as periodic limb movement disorder, central sleep apnea or complex sleep apnea. These disorders should be treated to restore your sleep quality.

Since there are many reasons for being sleepy even after treatment of your sleep disorder, you will want to make sure that you address any issues associated with sleep hygiene, life changes, PAP equipment, compliance and additional sleep disorders with your physician to get back the sleep that you need for good health.

## FURTHER READING

1. [www.sleepfoundation.org](http://www.sleepfoundation.org)
2. [www.apneasupport.org](http://www.apneasupport.org)
3. [www.sleepguide.com](http://www.sleepguide.com)