

Desensitization to Positive Airway Pressure Therapy

Desensitization to Positive Airway Pressure (PAP) therapy is a process where we teach children how to tolerate CPAP or BiPAP. This can be difficult for any child. Our sleep team specializes in helping children tolerate these therapies. Parental involvement is necessary and all the steps need to be practiced at home for this process to work.



The first step is for your child to be evaluated by a sleep specialist. This may be done during your child's hospitalization, or it may need to be done in the outpatient Sleep Clinic. Next, your child will meet with Dr. Susan Crane and Respiratory Therapist Todd Antisdell who work one-on-one with your child.

This is a brief summary of the steps in this process.

1. Mask introduction – During this step we begin by introducing the patient to the book “Marvelous Mask” created by Susan Crane. It shows many people wearing masks, as well as showing the benefits of PAP therapy. Reading this book to your child every day, along with positive statements is a type of cognitive therapy and is intended to increase positive reactions to masks and PAP.
2. Mask fitting – We choose a mask that will have a good fit and best meet the patient's needs. Sometimes we will need to use more than one mask – especially if they will be using PAP long term.
3. Mask desensitization – Depending on the age, developmental level or anxiety level of the child, we may need to help the child become used to the feeling of the mask on their face. This is needed especially when the child has had a negative experience with PAP in the past.
4. PAP introduction – In the clinic we put air under pressure in the mask, not only to check for leaks and get the best fit, but also to introduce the child to the physical sensation.
5. PAP desensitization – We practice with air pressure in the mask to allow the child to become used to the feeling of breathing against pressure.
6. Adherence – in follow up appointments we will help with any issues that might have come up such as mask fit, air pressure comfort, behavioral issues, and sinus comfort (general sinus hygiene, sinus rinses and reduction of swelling or nasal steroids).



This process can take several visits. We need to have the patient and family's undivided attention so it is necessary for this to be done on an outpatient setting, or in the controlled environment of our clinic space). With families who practice each day, fully desensitizing to PAP therapy typically takes between 2 weeks and 3 months.

[Providers—please check ✓ the appropriate box(es) below:]

Next step, please:

- Make an appointment with a sleep specialist in the Sleep Clinic by calling 720-777-6181.
- Make an appointment with Dr. Crane and Todd Antisdell, RT, for “desensitization.”
Call Diana at 720-777-5026 or Carissa at 720-777-2288 for appointments.