

Mask Fitting / Desensitization Clinic What to Expect:

We know tolerating positive airway pressure can be challenging for some children. During the mask fitting or positive airway pressure desensitization appointment, we teach children how to tolerate the mask required to deliver positive airway pressure. During your visit you will meet with a board certified sleep physician or nurse practitioner as well as a registered sleep technologists (RPSGT) with an additional certification in clinical sleep health (CCSH).

Here is a brief summary of what to expect during this visit:

1. Introduction to continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP): The sleep technologist (RPSGT/CCSH) will explain about sleep apnea, types of masks and introduce you and your child to the machine.
2. Mask fitting – The sleep technologist (RPSGT/CCSH) will choose a mask and ensure it fits your child's facial structure.
3. Mask desensitization – the patient will touch the mask and practice putting it on his/her face. Depending on the age, developmental level, and/or anxiety level, several attempts and various techniques may be necessary to help the child tolerate the mask. Positive statements about the mask and lots of praise are needed during the child's desensitization period.
4. Introduction to PAP therapy – the sleep technologist (RPSGT/CCSH) will let the child "play with the air". The pressure will be introduced as a happy and fun experience. If the patient tolerates, we will trial the pressure with the mask to make sure we have the perfect mask fit.
5. Education – The parent will be educated about the mask, including proper mask fit, cleaning, and what to expect at the upcoming appointments.
6. Practice at home – This is the key to success with our patients! Parents and families need to practice with the mask at home as part of their daily routine. Have the child practice wearing the mask while he/she is awake, doing something they enjoy, and remember to always give positive praise about the mask. The mask should not be worn during sleep until the machine and positive airway pressure are provided.

Some patient's require additional desensitization. The Johns Hopkins All Children's Sleep Center has partnered up with occupational therapy to provide intense practice/desensitization for these children. If it is felt by the family and physician this program would be beneficial for the child, the sleep physician can refer the patient during your visit.