

■ THE CPAP TROUBLESHOOTING CHECKLIST

A Printable Guide to Common Side Effects, Red Flags, and Your First-Week
Symptom Tracker

Print this out. Keep it by your bed. Check things off as you go.

2026 EDITION

Why This Checklist Exists

The first few weeks of CPAP therapy come with a learning curve — dry mouth, mask leaks, a little bloating, maybe a night or two of feeling like giving up. Almost none of it means your therapy is failing. This checklist gives you a fast way to identify what's going on, try the right fix, and know exactly when it's time to call your provider instead of guessing.

Symptom, Cause & Fix Checklist

Check off any symptoms you're experiencing, then try the matching fix before your next appointment.

Dry mouth or dry nose

- Likely cause: humidity set too low, or air escaping through the mouth
- Try: raise your humidifier level one setting at a time
- Try: a chin strap or switch to a full-face mask if mouth breathing is the cause

Nasal congestion

- Likely cause: dry airflow, allergies, or nasal irritation
- Try: increase humidity setting
- Try: treat underlying seasonal or nighttime allergies separately

Mask pressure marks or red spots

- Likely cause: wrong size or cushion style
- Try: re-check your sizing guide — don't assume your old size is still right
- Try: a different cushion type (nasal, full-face, or nasal pillow)

Noisy air leaks

- Likely cause: poor mask seal
- Try: adjust and re-tighten headgear straps evenly
- Try: replace a worn or stretched-out cushion

Bloating or swallowing air (aerophagia)

- Likely cause: pressure set higher than you currently need
- Try: ask your provider about a pressure or ramp-setting adjustment

Red Flags — Call Your Provider If You Notice

- Chest pain or chest pressure
- Severe or worsening air swallowing/bloating
- Frequent nosebleeds
- Major skin injury or broken skin from the mask
- Breathing that feels worse instead of better over time
- You feel like quitting because the mask feels unbearable

None of these mean you did something wrong — they mean it's time for a professional check-in, not a reason to stop therapy on your own.

Your 7-Night Symptom Tracker

Fill this in each morning. Patterns are easier to spot after a week than after one bad night.

Night	Dry Mouth	Congestion	Leaks	Pressure Marks	Bloating	Notes
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						

Bring this page to your next follow-up appointment — it gives your provider real data instead of "it's been kind of rough."

Questions to Ask at Your Follow-Up

Bring your tracker log and this list to your next appointment — it helps your provider make specific adjustments instead of guessing.

- Can we adjust my pressure setting based on what I've been experiencing?
- Would a different ramp time help with how strong the airflow feels at bedtime?
- Is my current mask type still the right fit, or should I try a different style?
- Could a heated tube help with the dryness I'm noticing?
- How will we know if my current setup is actually working long-term?
- What's a realistic timeline before I should expect real improvement?

Providers can only fine-tune settings based on what you tell them — walking in with specific questions (and your tracker log) usually gets a faster, more useful appointment than "it's just not comfortable yet."

Still Adjusting to Your Setup?

This checklist was brought to you by **cpapRX** — a U.S. telehealth platform offering CPAP machines with built-in humidifiers, adjustable ramp settings, and mask fitting support to help you get past the adjustment period faster.

Visit www.cpaprx.com/cpap-machines to browse machines built for a smoother start.

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Sources & Disclaimer

This checklist references general guidance from:

- CDC — Sleep and Sleep Disorders
- NIH/NHLBI — Sleep Apnea
- FDA — CPAP Devices
- AASM — Sleep Apnea Patient Education

Disclaimer: This checklist is for informational purposes only and is not medical advice. Always consult a qualified healthcare provider about CPAP side effects that don't improve or feel severe.