

# How CPAP treatment can help your sex life

Information for patients

## **How can CPAP treatment positively affect my sex life?**

You may have concerns or questions about how using a CPAP machine may impact on your sex life. It is safe to have sex when having a diagnosis of sleep apnoea and while using your CPAP machine. CPAP treatment can lead to an improvement in intimacy with your bedtime partner.

Treating your sleep apnoea with a CPAP machine may lead to an improvement in your energy levels and libido, as well as help resolve erectile dysfunction. CPAP treatment has also been associated with mood improvement and a decrease in irritability, which may lead to an increase in sexual interest for yourself and your sexual partner.

If your bedtime partner complains about your snoring and/ or sleeps in a separate room, your night time relationship and intimacy may be affected. Using your CPAP machine can reduce your snoring and as a result may lead to your bedtime partner sleeping in the same room as you again and may lead to an improvement in your night time relationship.

## **Concerns about your CPAP machine making you look unattractive**

You may feel unattractive when wearing your mask or worry that you will look less attractive to your bedtime partner. However, you only need to wear the mask

when you go to sleep. You do not have to wear it during sex.

When wearing your CPAP mask, you can still share moments of intimacy with your bedtime partner such as cuddling. You may want to try being the “little spoon” with the tube faced away from you and your partner.

If you feel that by putting on the mask you are sending a message to your partner that you are not interested sex, tell your partner that this is not always the case and that you can remove the mask.

### **New bedtime partners**

You may feel embarrassed initially when introducing the mask, but remember, you only need to wear the mask while you are sleeping and not during sex. You may want to try talking to your bedtime partner about your concerns and explain your medical needs.

### **Further information**

For more information, please visit the British Lung Foundation website at: [www.blf.org.uk](http://www.blf.org.uk), where you can read and download leaflets about sleep apnoea, CPAP treatment and about sex and breathlessness.

## More information

For more information about the respiratory medicine service at the Royal Free London, please visit our website: [www.royalfree.nhs.uk/services/services-a-z/respiratory-medicine](http://www.royalfree.nhs.uk/services/services-a-z/respiratory-medicine)

## Your feedback

If you have any feedback on this leaflet or for a list of references for it, please email:

[rf.communications@nhs.net](mailto:rf.communications@nhs.net)

## Alternative formats

This leaflet is also available in large print. If you need this leaflet in another format – for example Braille, a language other than English or audio – please ask a member of staff.

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