

The Proper Care and Maintenance of CPAP Masks and Other Respiratory Equipment

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Dear Reader - please bear with me while I make a point for your consideration.

“Honey, the windshield is full of bugs, push the spray button to clean the bugs off.” “Okay, I did it.” “Well, don’t just SPRAY IT - turn on the WIPERS to wipe off the friendly bugs and accumulated dirt to get it CLEAN!

“Husband, will you help me clean some of the glass in the home? The glass has accumulated finger prints and dirt on it.” “Okay honey but I have a golf tee time real soon so I’ll just SPRAY the glass and leave it.” “Oh NO you won’t - you have to WIPE after you spray with a LINT FREE TOWEL to CLEAN the glass!” “Well okay but it takes more time and I’ll be late.”

“Dear, will you help me dust the furniture? How about you do the dining room table?” Use one of the commercial dusting sprays to polish and clean the wood finish and remove dust and other household contaminants okay?” “Well okay, I’ll just SPRAY the table top, that should be enough!” “NO honey, you must first SPRAY to moisten the table top, then you MUST WIPE with a LINT FREE CLOTH to properly clean and polish the wood table top!”

And so the many scenarios can go! POINT I AM MAKING!! You simply cannot just **SPRAY** your mask, other respiratory equipment or musical instrument mouthpiece to properly **CLEAN AND DEODORIZE** it. **YOU MUST SPRAY AND THEN WIPE CLEAN WITH A LINT FREE TOWEL.**

All humans carry, in their upper respiratory passages, normal “friendly” bacteria called “normal flora.” We each have accumulated these bacteria which in fact help keep us healthy. It is only when a “foreign” bacteria enters the area that we become ill. Each use of the CPAP mask for sleeping will accumulate some of these “friendly bacteria” on the mask (or other respiratory equipment and/or musical instrument mouthpieces). If not dealt with after the CPAP mask is used, these bacteria (including facial oils and mucous) will begin to cause a foul odor. The mask or equipment will also begin to turn yellow, harden the rubber/plastic and deteriorate remarkably fast.

Thus, how can you **PROPERLY** maintain your mask and other equipment? It is relatively **SIMPLE** and **FAST**.

First, you **MUST USE A LINT FREE TOWEL** ! Why do I make such an issue over the **LINT FREE** towel? IF LINT is left on the mask or other respiratory equipment, then during the next use that piece of lint may be blown down the respiratory tree and cause an “aspiration pneumonia.” This is a problem to pay attention to. It is serious and both difficult to treat and recover from.

Second, the towel must be of adequate size, strength and weave to clean off bacteria, mucous, facial oils and mold if present.

The towels from **Respi-Products** are **LINT FREE** and of the proper size, strength and weave. They are effective and efficient while being cost effective. Packaged in a clear plastic bag, they are easily stored at home or packed with your CPAP for travel (they are very light in weight especially important for air travel as well as going through security).

We have included a **1 oz.** spray bottle of our **RespiClean™** also airport security friendly. It is a formula that will properly clean the mask or other respiratory equipment. It is **not a disinfectant** but rather a “bacteriostatic” cleaner and deodorizer. Read on to gain appreciation of why **I do not recommend using a “disinfectant”** which is so commonly popularized in our society for just about every use.

A person has two choices when using the towels. First, to mist the CPAP mask inside and out, then wipe the mask with one of the dry towels. Secondly, one may moisten the towel and then wipe the mask (or other equipment) inside and out leaving a thin film of the **RespiClean** to dry very quickly. Either method works very well. Again, what you have accomplished with ease each day you use the mask or other equipment is to **WIPE OFF** normal flora bacteria, any mold, mucous or/and facial oils.

One last plea. Wiping the mask six days a week is fine BUT on the seventh day of any week, one should **SOAK**

the equipment (this time including the hose) to **deep clean and deodorize the equipment**. That is why Respi-Products has the **RespiKit™** and **RespiSoak™** in their product line.

Soaking (or washing) respiratory equipment (mask, hose, humidifier parts) in a home sink is a poor idea. A sink in the home has more bacteria (not necessarily “friendly”) than the home toilet. One must use a **DEDICATED SOAKING CONTAINER** to minimize “outside contaminants” being introduced onto the equipment instead of cleaning such off the mask (or other equipment). The **RespiKit** is such a container when used exclusively for mask and respiratory equipment cleaning. Simply add 4 oz. of RespiSoak 2% Concentrate to the container, add 1.5 gals of warm tap water (up to the fill line of the **RespiKit**), then add a squeeze of “surfactant” (which is the medical word for pure liquid soap or liquid dishwashing soap - non-detergent, non-antibacterial), mix with a clean hand, then soak the equipment for 4 hours. After the soaking time, wash the equipment thoroughly with warm tap water and let the equipment air dry OR use a **LINT FREE towel** to dry the equipment. Now you have properly cleaned and deodorized the equipment to help keep your respiratory system healthy.

The Case AGAINST using a “Disinfectant” To Clean Your Respiratory Equipment

Your mask or other respiratory equipment is only used by ONE PERSON, YOURSELF!! You are not sharing the use of the equipment with anyone else just like you do not share your toothbrush. Thus, only YOUR OWN friendly normal flora may be on the mask as well as your own mucous or facial oils. It is rare to find mold or mildew on the mask with regular use and cleaning. The ONLY TIME that a “disinfectant” needs to be used is when a Sleep Clinic will use a mask on one patient tonight and then use the same mask on another patient the next night. Then a disinfectant is required to kill bacteria which might be “friendly” to someone else, BUT NOT friendly to YOU.

Recent literature from the University of Michigan reveals numerous studies conducted between 1980 and 2006. These studies clearly concluded that “antibacterial soaps that contain triclosan as the active ingredient are no better at preventing infections than plain soap.” Further, these studies showed that the “continued use of antibacterial anything in the home is actually posing a **SERIOUS health risk** to the public because they are killing **BENEFICIAL BACTERIA** and reducing the effectiveness of some common antibiotics, such as amoxicillin.” These studies have been published in a peer reviewed journal *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, August 2007.

These findings concur with earlier research conducted by *Tufts University Alliance* for the prudent use of antibiotics. The Tufts Study concluded that the **overuse of “disinfectants” could cause new strains of bacteria to develop by mutation, thus changing the kinds of bacteria in our homes to those that may actually be very harmful and thus resistant to antibiotics known today.**” A non-profit group called *Beyond Pesticides* found in their lab studies a number of strains of mutated bacteria that are now resistant to “disinfectants” and thus antibiotics. Some disinfectants also convert to “dioxins” when exposed to water and ultraviolet radiation and thus become carcinogenic (cause cancer to form in humans). Beside causing cancer, these chemicals have been linked to a weakening of the human immune system, decreased fertility, altered sex hormones and birth defects. Thus, killing the normal flora needed for good health may in fact be making people sick instead of healthy. The *Journal of Dairy Food and Environmental Sanitation* back in 1998 published an article clearly stating that washing a person’s hands in warm water with pure soap for 20 seconds may be a very effective way to reduce harmful bacteria and thus remains one of our best defenses against getting sick.

Having cited the foregoing information, I sincerely believe the best way to keep your respiratory system in good health while using CPAP or other respiratory equipment is to use a cleaner and deodorizer of high integrity. RespiClean, RespiSoak and RespiKit are proven products to be effective and efficient for this purpose. I personally have had Sleep Apnea for over 14 years. I use a mask every night. Over the years of use I have perfected the process and proven it highly effective for daily wiping of the mask and weekly soaking of all my equipment.. The use of a disinfectant for this cleaning process in the HOME, in my opinion, is strongly discouraged!

Good Health to you always!