

# Heated Humidity Criteria

CPAP Therapy for some time has been considered standard care for moderate to severe Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA). Compliance with this therapy, however, is often reduced due to nasal dryness burning, and congestion. These side effects may become severe enough for patients to discontinue treatment.

Studies have shown the use of humidification to be effective in alleviating these side effects. For patients with less severe nasal symptoms, the use of non-heated humidity may adequately humidify the upper airway. However, studies have shown that patients experiencing more severe effects require heated humidity to reduce their symptoms.

Current literature suggests that the following patient populations experience more upper-airway symptoms in conjunction with CPAP therapy. The use of heated humidity for these patients should be considered medically necessary to maintain patient compliance.

- Patients with chronic nasal symptoms  
(Including conditions existing prior to initiation of CPAP treatment)
- Patients prone to mouth leaks
- Elderly patients  
(As a person ages, the likelihood of nasal complaints, increased nasal resistance, and/or impairment of the mucociliary function of the nose increases)
- Patients taking medications that may result in dryness of the nasal mucosa  
(i.e. anti-hypertensives, anti-depressants)

Although the literature has documented the benefits of heated humidity in the patient populations listed above, this treatment modality should also be considered medically necessary for patients for whom non-heated humidity has been considered and ruled out by the treating physician or evaluated and proven not effective for alleviation of the nasal side-effects.