



# Obstructive Sleep Apnea Treatment

Kaiser Permanente Central Valley Outpatient Sleep Lab  
209-824-4200

## Treating Sleep Apnea with Oral Appliances including current coverage guidelines.

### Sleep Apnea treatment options

There are several ways that Obstructive Sleep Apnea can be treated including Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP), surgery, oral appliances, positional sleep strategies and weight loss. CPAP is the preferred therapy, as it is the most consistent and effective way to normalize the breathing abnormalities that occur during sleep in patient with sleep apnea.

For that reason, virtually all patients at our center with newly diagnosed sleep apnea are prescribed CPAP. Most patients prescribed CPAP do tolerate it, though occasional "trouble shooting" is required initially with our sleep team staff, for example changing masks for leaking or discomfort. Some patients, however, do not tolerate CPAP.

### Coverage Information

Patients who do not tolerate CPAP that are interested in an oral appliance should be aware:

- Insurance coverage for the oral appliance is available in those patients with appropriate DME coverage for the device with:
  - “Documented failure of CPAP therapy after appropriate attempts at CPAP initiation and/or maintenance. Failure may be documented as 'patient intolerance' after attempting alternate interfaces and/or device adjustment or re-titration as deemed necessary by the sleep lab physician.” (KP NCAL Coverage Guideline)
- This means that you must have tried and failed CPAP including multiple attempts at trouble shooting by our department, which may include switching your mask , treating sinus congestion with nasal sprays , and adjusting the settings on your machine in order for the appliance to be covered by your insurance plan.
- If you have not attempted CPAP, you will not meet the criteria for insurance coverage of the oral appliance.
- Further, not all patients have DM E coverage for the device. If you would like to inquire whether you have coverage please call member services to inquire about “DME coverage” for an “oral appliance to treat sleep apnea.” If you do have coverage, you will still need to fulfill the criteria of documented failure of CPAP as noted above.
- You always have to option to forego insurance coverage of these appliances and pay out of pocket directly with a Sleep Dentist to obtain one.

### Questions or concerns:

### Contact Member Services, 1-800-464-4000, for specific questions about your plan.

If you have questions or concerns about this policy, please call our sleep lab at 209-824-4200. However, at this time, we adhere to the current policies that dictate when these devices are covered benefits. Please note as well that these devices are often not medically appropriate for many of our patients (e.g. those with severe sleep apnea).

If you are having trouble with CPAP, we will work with you to try to improve your experience and tolerance. If you cannot tolerate CPAP, we will work with you to find an appropriate alternative to treat your sleep apnea. In some cases, an oral appliance may be appropriate, but newly diagnosed patients cannot be prescribed an oral appliance without a reasonable trial of CPAP as outlined by the current guidelines.