



## **BIPAP UNITS**

**Purpose:** Bi-level Positive Airway Pressure (BIPAP) units are electrical devices that use a motor and a blower to maintain a flow of air that provides pressure to your airways, preventing them from collapsing. By keeping your airways open you can breathe uninterrupted during sleep. BIPAP units require a doctor's order before use. You must always follow and abide by all manufacturer's operating and safety instructions.

**Types:** There are different types of BIPAP units but they all function by applying low-pressure airflow to your airways. The air pressure holds your airways open, preventing the collapse of your palate and tongue, which can obstruct your air passages. Some BIPAP units have a ramping feature that starts the air pressure at a lower pressure and gradually increases over time. This ramping feature can assist you in going to sleep.

**Accessories:** In order for the pressure from the BIPAP unit to keep your airways open, a mask or nasal device must be used. These masks or nasal devices must be fitted to your face. There are many different kinds of nasal masks, nasal pillows, and oral devices to choose from to facilitate a good seal and maintain your comfort. If a headgear appliance is used to secure the mask or nasal pillows, it should be snug enough for a good fit in all sleeping positions. Your supplies have a useful life that varies depending upon use and will occasionally need to be replaced. These items usually can be set up on recurring delivery schedules so you don't have to make a special trip into Discount Drug Mart Professional Medical Equipment and Services. These accessories also need separate prescriptions and must be properly fitted. Humidifiers are sometimes necessary to moisten the air.

**Use:** Each BIPAP unit has two pressure settings that must be set and verified by Discount Drug Mart Professional Medical Equipment and Services. Never adjust these pressure settings on your own. A good practice when preparing to go to bed is to put your headgear and mask (or pillows) on in front of a mirror. Once you have the headgear and mask on, get into bed and attach the tubing, then turn the unit on. It is acceptable to gradually work up to wearing the device the entire night. Your compliance with your physician's treatment plan is very important. No other piece of medical

equipment alters your lifestyle like a BIPAP unit. If you look at how many times you awaken each night, and the lack of restful sleep you have had, it is easy to learn to sleep with the BIPAP device on.

**Maintenance:** BIPAP units should be kept clean by using a damp cloth and mild dishwashing detergent every few days. Never use alcohol or an alcohol-based solution to clean the unit. Always unplug the unit before cleaning. The BIPAP unit must be completely dry before plugging it back in. The air-inlet filter should be checked daily. If the filter is reusable, it should be able to withstand cleaning in a solution of lukewarm water and antibacterial dishwashing detergent and rinsed thoroughly with tap water. If disposable, the filter should be changed when dirty. Never clean your mask or nasal device in the dishwasher. Your tubing can be cleaned with the same antibacterial soap and water and hung vertically to dry. Always allow all BIPAP accessories to completely air dry before reattaching them to the BIPAP unit. Never attempt any repair on the BIPAP unit. Each BIPAP device should be regularly pressure checked according to the manufacturer's guidelines. If you are using a humidifier, the *distilled* water must be drained and the humidifier cleaned daily.