

Sleep apnea device eligibility



FAQ for Members

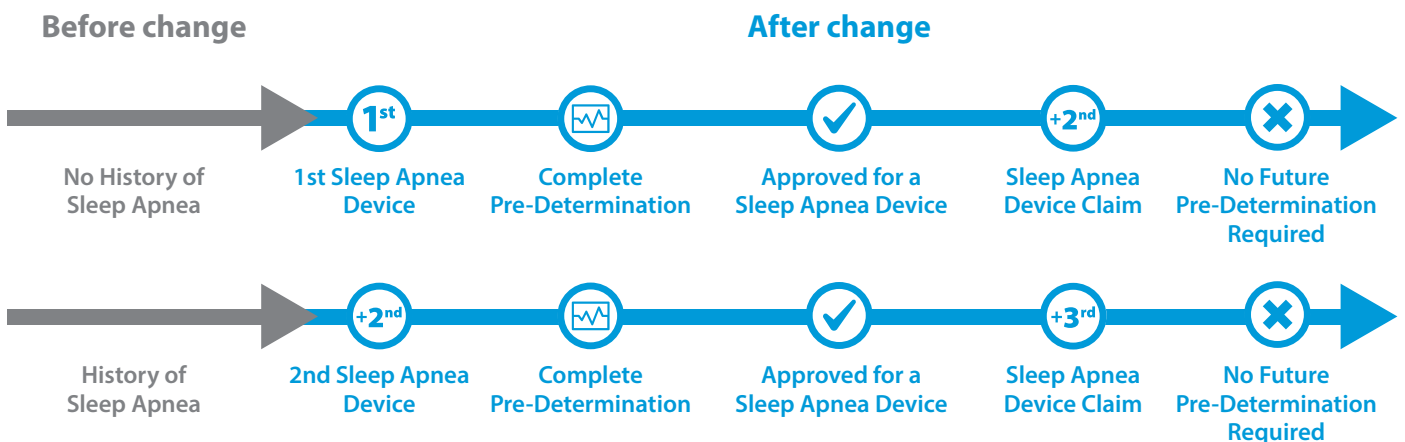
As of October 15, 2018, Pacific Blue Cross is introducing new criteria for assessing eligibility for sleep apnea device intervention. Previously, members had to provide a doctor's note stating a diagnosis of obstructive sleep apnea for coverage.

Q: What's Changing?

To determine eligibility for sleep apnea devices, members must now complete a Sleep Apnea Device Pre-Determination Form that will be evaluated against clinical guidelines. This form will include additional medical information, including a copy of your sleep study.

If we determine the sleep apnea device is eligible under the plan and coverage with Pacific Blue Cross remains in effect, you will not have to complete the pre-determination process again for the same sleep apnea device in the future.

New sleep apnea device process



Q: Why the change?

At Pacific Blue Cross we need to ensure that health plans remain sustainable for everyone's benefit. Where specific benefit plans do not address the severity of sleep apnea, we will apply the criteria shown below to ensure only members that would benefit clinically from sleep apnea devices are provided with this technology.

CATEGORY OF SLEEP APNEA SEVERITY	ELIGIBLE?	APNEA HYPOPNEA INDEX (AHI) SCORE
None/ Minimal	No	Less than 5 AHIs per hour
Mild	No*	Greater than or equal to 5, but fewer than 15 AHIs per hour
Moderate	Yes	Greater than or equal to 15, but fewer than 30 AHIs per hour
Severe	Yes	Greater than or equal 30 AHIs per hour

* First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) clients may be eligible for certain sleep apnea devices in this category.

Q: Where are the forms?

All pre-determination forms can be downloaded from our website. Contact the Call Center if you would prefer a paper pre-determination mailed to you.

Q: What information is needed to submit a pre-determination?

1. A completed Sleep Apnea Device Pre-Determination Form
2. A copy of a sleep study report
3. The type of device requested
4. A quote for the device from the provider

Q: What type of sleep study test and test results are required?

Results from both either a Sleep Study Using Home-Based Portable Monitor (Level 3) or a Polysomnogram (Level 1) are acceptable sleep studies to diagnose Obstructive Sleep Apnea including in-home sleep study tests that are completed in 1-2 nights. Whichever test is recommended, it must provide an AHI score to be considered an eligible form of testing.

Q: Why are you not asking for my Respiratory Disturbance Index?

The respiratory disturbance index (RDI) includes not only apneas and hypopneas but may also include other subtle breathing irregularities. The apnea-hypopnea index measure is more commonly used by Canadian research centres to assess sleep apnea severity.

Q: What impact will there be on members who have never had a sleep apnea device?

To ensure that we have the right medical documentation for you on file, Pacific Blue Cross will need every member requesting a sleep apnea device to complete the pre-determination process.

Once Pacific Blue Cross has processed your pre-determination, we will notify you via mail or email.

Q: What impact will there be on members who have had a sleep apnea device in the past?

The next time you are eligible for a sleep apnea device, you will be required to complete a pre-determination to assess benefit eligibility.

To simplify the pre-determination process, if you are currently using sleep apnea devices, Pacific Blue Cross will accept copies of sleep studies completed in the past.

Q: What happens when a sleep apnea device pre-determination is approved?

Approved pre-determinations will allow members to submit manual claims for the applicable sleep apnea device according to their benefit limitations. Once eligibility has been confirmed under the plan, and coverage with Pacific Blue Cross remains in effect, you will not have to complete the pre-determination process again for the same sleep apnea device in the future.

Q: What happens if a sleep apnea device pre-determination is not approved?

Members must meet the pre-determination requirements for a sleep apnea device to receive coverage. If you haven't met the requirements and your physician still feels that you need a device, please submit an appeal for review.

Q: Pacific Blue Cross is my secondary insurance payer, do these changes apply to me?

Yes, all members must meet Pacific Blue Cross' pre-determination process for sleep apnea device coverage eligibility.

Questions?

We're here to answer any questions you have about this new process, please contact us at 604 419-2000.