

## Simplicity is Key for FPH's Zest™ Nasal Mask

Customers wanted it and the engineers at Fisher & Paykel Healthcare (FPH) made ease of use a reality.

A quick look at the elements of Fisher & Paykel Healthcare's (FPH) new Zest™ Nasal Mask yields a lengthy list of features, and a lot of trademark symbols. FlexiFit™, Gilder™ Strap, and Stretchgear™ are among the familiar FPH items on the Zest™ that clinicians and patients have come to rely on. The little "TM" is a testament to the proprietary adaptations that FPH engineers have worked to establish over the years.

As the latest introduction to the FPH nasal mask family, the Zest Range Nasal Mask is being touted above all for its ease of use, particularly when it comes to fitting and maintaining. "The members of our strong clinical team have been clinicians themselves, worked in the sleep apnea environment, worked with customers, and worked in hospitals," says **Masoud Vahidi, Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) Product Manager for FPH, Irvine, Calif.** "My main job is to listen to the customer, then translate that input into feature sets for our engineering and development team."

It's not unusual, says Vahidi, for members of that engineering crew to travel abroad in an effort to listen to customer feedback, or to determine additional customer needs. This information gathering comes mostly after production of the mask for the purpose of next generation improvements during the manufacturing process.

Vahidi acknowledges the competitive nature of the nasal mask market, but believes the product sector is still ripe for innovation. Aside from FlexiFit, FlexiFoam™, and the Glider Strap, new features in the Zest Nasal Masks range include the Easy-Clip Silicone Seal with VTS™ (Variable Thickness Silicone) technology that allows patients to quickly take the lightweight mask apart for cleaning purposes.

### No Shortage of Customers

Adding yet another nasal mask to a crowded field was an easy decision for Vahidi, who certainly believes in the potential of sleep in 2010 and beyond. "I don't think there is any hype as far as the potential of the market goes," says Vahidi. "Depending on which clinical study you look at, there is some consensus out there that 5% to 10% of the population could have some level of OSA. This is something real that people are dealing with."

So far, positive feedback from patients bodes well for long-term compliance, which is a major goal of clinicians and sleep laboratory officials. "We do sell to sleep labs, and we do sell to our traditional brick and mortar DMEs," says Vahidi.



"The mask has eliminated a lot of the callbacks and fitting issues that patients have in the first 30 to 60 days, which saves clinicians a lot of work and may result in increasing patient compliance."

The standard size for the Zest came out a little over a year ago, with Zest Petite and Zest Plus sizes coming on the market in the middle of last year. "Based on our internal Anthropometric database testing, we believe the Zest standard will fit about 80% of our patient population, and anything outside those 80% the Zest Petite will fit smaller faces—with the Zest Plus size for larger faces," adds Vahidi. "We believe the Zest Range Nasal Mask will pretty much fit the entire population."

With growth of around 18% in the first part of 2009, FPH officials are confident they can vigorously compete in the competitive sleep market. "I am sure the economy affected everyone," laments Vahidi. "We were affected as well, but thanks to our reputation—based on our excellent products—I believe we have done well. We are working on our new line of devices CPAP interfaces and always trying to improve and enhance patient compliance and comfort."

For more information, please visit [www.fphcare.com/osa.html](http://www.fphcare.com/osa.html).