

Targeted Humidity and Moisture Seeking

By John C, a member of the Boston Sjogren's Syndrome Support Group
Updated for our Feb 7 2015 meeting.

The national magazine of Sjögren's Foundation is *Moisture Seekers*. Fourteen years ago, when I read the magazine, I realized keeping my body humidified as a MOISTURE SEEKER should become a major objective for maintaining my health. At least for me, rainy days with high humidity over 60% makes me feel good and almost back to my pre-illness normal. Thus, the issue became how to recreate Spring conditions of 68F and 60%+ humidity in the house, especially in Fall and Winter. The difficulty is not humidifying the windows and walls too. We had a whole house humidifier, but I had to run it low (35%) during winter months which kept me too dry, so I investigated portable units and other methods as possible solutions to targeting the area around me with higher humidity or ways to protect and seal in my body's moisture. The following have really helped me:

Large Portable Ultrasonic Units (For home, office, or hotel \$71.66 at Amazon or pharmacies)

Portable units must be easy to clean which includes being able to reach all areas of the tank and base unit. I also wanted to be able to add directional tubing so I could send the moisture stream to a limited area (My head and face).

I found the Vicks Ultrasonic (**model number:** V5100NS/V5100NS-JUV at Amazon) satisfies my requirements. I can reach all the tank areas with brushes, sponges, disinfectant wipes, and paper towels. The base unit has no hidden areas and is easy to wipe clean. I could not find other units which were easier to clean or to insert tubing into the discharge port. It is easy, and I am not handy.

My modification method is I bought 1.5 inch pvc tubing and connections at Home Depot and Lowes. I cut the tubing to a variety of lengths using a hack saw. The stores may cut it for you for free. I also bought many different 1.5 inch couplings of various curves and connections. This



allows me to extend the unit's flow to meet any situation (Air conditioners or drafts can move the moisture too far from your face). I can keep the humidity at 80-95% by my face and at normal humidity throughout the rest of the room which reduces the chance of mold in the walls or on windows from high room humidity. The humidity drops completely to normal greater than 3 feet away. I do not cement the pieces together which allows me to be flexible in how I combine the pieces to meet my needs. I have one unit on the night stand by my bed, and I route the humidity over my pillow. I put towels on my pillow and sheets and change them during the night to avoid having wet towels against my skin. I have one unit by my favorite tv chair and computer area for working during the day. I place a blanket over the chair when I humidify.

Be sure to keep them clean and disinfected. Use distilled water if you can, less particulates discharged into air.

Small Portable Ultrasonic Units (For extreme portability or by computer \$30 each, \$20 for car converter)

Homedics unit UHE-CM15 puts out a lot of moisture and wets my nose within minutes. I use it while on the computer or watching tv with family and run it on house current. It can run on car lighter if you buy a variable converter and set output direction and current correctly to 4.5 volts. I

hold the unit in one hand on trips and near my nose and mouth. To keep it powered when power is not available, I bought a car battery portable power station and other portable power stations (ones for computers) and keep them charged as backup power sources in case of loss of power from storms. Amazon has them. They seem to stop working, but Amazon exchanges them. Bed, Bath and Beyond has them too, sometimes.

N-95 Mask (\$20 for 20 at hardware stores)

If traveling or out and no power, I use an N-95 Mask and put a small piece of paper napkin/towel in it and add a few drops of water or just add teaspoon or so of water to inside of mask. This creates a moist chamber around my mouth and nose. I have used this method many times on planes from Europe or Asia. I will wear the disposable masks 5-20 before tossing. On bad winters with heat on all the time, I may wear one at home if walking around a lot.

Nasal Spray and Emollients (\$15 for Eucerin, \$2 lip balms, \$9 for Xclear)

Experiment with them until you find one you like. I like Xlear with Xylitol for nose. The same goes for lip balms, try them until one works for you. I found Nivea Kiss of Moisture Essential Lip Care without sunblock works for me as sunblock is an irritant to my lips. No flavor or sun block is what I like. Read the labels carefully and see what ingredients are best for you. Experiment with thick creams too, such as, Eucerin, to coat and seal in skin moisture. The thick creams also prevent unpleasant nerve sensations (Without natural oil coating, my skin's nerve sensations are horrible and constant). I coat 3-4 times a day or as needed, even on scalp at times.