

PATIENT INFORMATION

Care of your Voice Prosthesis

Your voice prosthesis is a one-way valve fitted into the back wall of your trachea (wind pipe) through into the front wall of your oesophagus (food pipe). It allows you to produce voice by moving air from your lungs into your oesophagus and up over an area of muscle in your throat that vibrates. The vibration makes the sound, which you can learn to control with your mouth and tongue to make speech.

In order for your prosthesis to work properly it needs to be kept clean. In normal circumstances the prosthesis should be cleaned twice a day, more if you become 'chesty' and cough a lot.

- Use a saline nebuliser or spray regularly and particularly if your stoma/breathing becomes dry.
- If your chest feels tight you may be prescribed a ventolin nebuliser which you should use as directed by your doctor.
- Clean the stoma with cotton tipped applicator dipped in tepid tap water.
- Keep your stoma humidified by using a Buchanan bib or heat and moisture exchange device (HME).
- Flush the prosthesis with cooled boiled/clean water twice a day. The flushing pipette should be cleaned as per manufacturer's guidelines. If you use a brush to clean your prosthesis this must be performed gently to avoid damaging it.
- You should use Nystatin as prescribed by your doctor to prevent thrush growing on the prosthesis. Sometimes it may be necessary to treat thrush more vigorously with Miconazole – follow instructions as advised by your CNS or Speech and Language therapist.
- Rarely a prosthesis can fall out, should this happen remember that the puncture hole can close within 15 minutes. You should insert your white dilator, secure with tape.
- The prosthesis may begin to leak saliva and fluids, this will make you cough. You can use a temporary plug (you will not be able to speak while this is in place) but the prosthesis should be changed as soon as possible.

Contact straight away:

- **Warrington Ward: 01803 655507**
- **SLT: 01803 654949**
- **Head & Neck Specialist Nurses: 01803 655044**

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.

Working with you, for you

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