

Learning How to Use Your Electrolarynx

After a laryngectomy the trachea (windpipe) and larynx (voicebox) are permanently separated from the rest of the respiratory system (mouth & nose). An electrolarynx is one way to produce a 'voice' after your surgery.

Your speech and language therapist has shown you how to use your electrolarynx. Here is a reminder and some tips for practise:

Placement: Correct placement of the aid on your neck, cheek or in your mouth is essential for success:

- Practice using your non-dominant hand – this will enable you to continue with other activities whilst you are talking
- When using an intra-oral aid, the tube should be inserted about 2.5-5cm (1-2 inches) inside your mouth, at the corner, not in between your teeth
- When using on your neck or cheek, a soft, pliable area of skin is required, large enough to place the head of the aid comfortably. Place the head of the electrolarynx completely flat against the surface we have chosen for you to use
- If you have just had surgery, are having radiotherapy or suffer with lymphoedema, try placing your electrolarynx between your cheek bone and jaw bone
- Do not use on a spot that makes you cough or is uncomfortable

On/Off timing: Switch the electrolarynx on only as you start to speak, and switch it off as soon as you have stopped talking. This may be easier if you speak more slowly.

Phrasing: Try to use a natural speaking rhythm with pauses, as in everyday conversation.

Loudness: You will need to adjust the volume on the electrolarynx for quiet and noisy situations. Reduce the volume when you are on the telephone.

Intonation: Try to introduce variations and interest into your speech. It may help to practise telling a joke, where changes in tone are required.

Speech clarity: You may need to emphasize speech sounds to help people understand you. You could practise this using the following exercises:

- Open your mouth as if saying "ah"
- Repeat "mah", "mah"
- Count 1-10
- Recite the days of the week / months of the year
- Practise short social phrases e.g. Hello, how are you? Fine thanks. That's nice. See you soon
- Practise saying these similar-sounding words, emphasizing the difference between them:

am / an
all / or
on / ale
aim / aid
eye / isle
owe / ore
we / wear
wore / why
low / lay
law / lee

lame / lane
lone / load
me / may
more / my
knee / know
nor / name
pie / buy
too / do
tuck / duck
cut / gut

fan / van	lie / rye
fine / vine	late / rate
file / vile	lack / rack
few / view	lamp / ramp
see / she	pay / play
sip / ship	bite / bright
sock / shock	tick / trick
Sue / shoe	core / claw
chill / Jill	gate / grate
chess / Jess	four / floor
chain / Jane	sell / spell
chin / gin	sick / stick

If you have any questions, comments or concerns please contact the Adult Speech & Language Therapy Service on 01392 402489 or rde-tr.TherapyServices@nhs.net (please write 'Speech Therapy' in the subject line).

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

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