

Learning How to Use Your Voice Prosthesis

After a laryngectomy the trachea (windpipe) and larynx (voicebox) are permanently separated from the rest of the respiratory system (mouth & nose) which prevents you from being able to talk. You have had a voice prosthesis inserted. It takes time and practise to perfect your new voice.

Your speech and language therapist has shown you the correct way to do the following exercises:

- Make sure you are relaxed. Wriggle your shoulders and gently let them drop. Gently move your head from side to side to release any tension.
- Rest your non-dominant hand on your chest and only move your finger or thumb.
- Take a breath in and press on the centre of your HME (heat and moisture exchanger) / stoma. You need to create a good seal over your stoma to stop air escaping.
- Start with a making gentle 'hhhahhh' sound. Don't press too hard or try to force your voice out.
- Make sure you uncover your stoma when you start running out of breath.
- Experiment with the amount of air you need to use, and how loud / quiet you can make the sound.
- If you cannot get a voice, try cleaning your valve and having another go.
- Now try:
 - "mah", "mah"
 - Count 1-10
 - Days of the week / months of the year

- How are you?
- Fine thanks
- That's nice
- See you soon

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

Loudness: You will need to adjust the volume 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: Practise saying these similar-sounding words, emphasizing the difference between them:

Am / an	cut / gut
all / or	fan / van
on / ale	fine / vine
aim / aid	file / vile
eye / isle	few / view
owe / ore	see / she
we / wear	sip / ship
wore / why	sock / shock
low / lay	Sue / shoe
law / lee	chill / Jill
lame / lane	chess / Jess
lone / load	chain / Jane
me / may	chin / gin
more / my	lie / rye
knee / know	late / rate
nor / name	lack / rack
pie / buy	lamp / ramp
too / do	pay / play
tuck / duck	bite / bright

tick / trick
core / claw
gate / grate

four / floor
sell / spell
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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