

Learning How to Smell After A Laryngectomy

After a laryngectomy the trachea (windpipe) and lungs are permanently separated from the rest of the respiratory system (mouth & nose). To learn to smell again we need to create a vacuum in the mouth which will draw air into the nose.

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

Exercise 1

1. Move your lower jaw and floor of mouth downwards in a relaxed but rapid movement
2. Move your tongue downwards at the same time
3. Keep your lips closed
4. Repeat until the air reaches the smell centres in your nose

Exercise 2

1. Keep your lips closed
2. Hold your tongue against your palate (roof of your mouth)
3. Stabilise your tongue tip against the front teeth / ridge where your front teeth used to be.

4. Move the back of your tongue downwards in a pumping motion keeping the tip of the tongue still. Also known as the "polite yawn method"
5. Repeat the movement in quick succession until the air reaches the smell centres in your nose

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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