

Head and Neck Cancer Speech and Language Therapy

Laryngectomy Surgical Voice Restoration: Cleaning your Valve

Cleaning Your Valve

By following the advice given below on cleaning your valve, you will be able to clean your valve independently. This regime can be added to your stoma care routine and can be carried out as often as you require.

We recommend that you clean your valve at least once a day to prevent it becoming blocked. Blockages can cause the valve to leak and can also cause voice loss. You will be shown what to do by a member of hospital staff, but use this checklist as a reminder of the procedure when you are at home.

You will need:

- a mirror
- a good light source
- a cleaning brush
- a cup of water to rinse the brush in
- a drink
- kitchen towel
- a pipette or a small plastic tube(optional)

Clean your hands in soap and water thoroughly before cleaning your valve.



Patient Information

To clean the valve:

- Ensure that you have a good view of the valve. Adjust the light source and/or mirror if needed
- Direct the brush end into the circular centre opening of the valve
- Once in place gently turn the brush between your fingers
- Turn the brush a few times before removing
- Carefully take the brush out
- Rinse the brush in the cup of water
- Check the brush is clean and repeat
- Continue cleaning until the brush comes out of the valve clean
- Try and voice to see if the valve is working properly and try a drink to ensure the valve is not leaking
- You can use your pipette to flush through the valve with a little water if you are still having difficulty cleaning debris away (optional)
- If thick debris is difficult to remove from the front of your valve, moisten some gauze, wrap it tightly around your finger and gently clean the whole area. Repeat this until the debris is removed.

Sterilisation of the valve brush

To sterilise the brush, wash it thoroughly with warm water. Then, pat the brush dry with some kitchen towel and leave it to air dry.

If you have been told that you have thrush on the back of your valve, throw away the brush after each use. This will prevent you re-introducing the infection. Once the thrush is clear, you can revert to washing your brush as above. Your GP can give you appropriate treatment for this. Please ask your speech and language therapist or clinical nurse specialist (CNS) if you require further information.

If you have any concerns or questions please contact the Head and Neck Team Speech and Language therapists or clinical nurse specialists on 024 7696 6449/ 024 7696 6452.

Patient Information

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 6449 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy

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