

# Head and Neck Cancer Speech and Language Therapy

## Maintenance of your Valve

Check your valve regularly to ensure it is functioning well. If your valve has debris on the back it may cause the valve flap to stay open and cause leakage. This may cause you to cough when you are eating or drinking.

- Sit in front of a mirror with a good light source on your stoma so you can see your valve clearly;
- Get a dark coloured drink such as coffee or Ribena and whilst looking at your valve, take a sip and swallow it;
- If you see any of the drink come through or around your valve then clean it again thoroughly and repeat the test sip;
- If the drink continues to flow through the valve then contact the Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) team;
- During this time, when eating and drinking place your safety plug into the valve;
- SLT will arrange a suitable time with you to come in for your valve change;
- You do not need to wear your plug unless eating and drinking. Whilst your plug is inserted you will not be able to talk.



## Patient Information

<b>Do:</b>	<b>Do not:</b>
Make sure that the valve is not dislodged during cleaning	Leave the house without your dilator, plug and brush
Contact the Speech and Language Therapy team if your valve leaks	Put anything except the brush into the valve
Replace the brush regularly	Forget your sizer and dilator when you come in for your valve change
Use your plug if your valve is leaking when eating and drinking	

**If you have any questions or need further information, please contact the Speech and Language Therapy team on telephone: 024 7696 6449.**

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.

To give feedback on this leaflet please email [feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk](mailto:feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk)

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