

# 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 do recommend that you clean the valve at least once a day to prevent it becoming blocked. Blockages can cause the valve to leak and can also cause voice loss. To begin with, 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:

- Mirror;
- A good light source;
- Cleaning brush;
- Pipette; a small plastic tube(optional);
- A cup of water to rinse the brush in;
- A drink;
- Kitchen towel.

Thoroughly clean your hands in soap and water before cleaning your valve

### 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;



## Patient Information

- 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 tightly around your finger and gently clean the whole area. Repeat until debris is removed.

### **Sterilisation of the valve brush:**

Wash the brush thoroughly with warm water. Part dry with kitchen towel and then leave to air dry. If you have been told that you have thrush on the back of your valve please throw away your brush after each use to prevent 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 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.

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.

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#### **Document History**

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