Patient Information

University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust

Speech and Language Therapy

Changing your exdwelling valve

This information should be read together with ‘Loading your Exdwelling Valve into a Gel Cap.’

If you have noticed deterioration in voice quality or leakage of food or drink from the valve, remove the valve for thorough cleaning.

Do not attempt this procedure until you have received full guidance from the Head and Neck Team speech and language therapists or your clinical nurse specialist.

You will need:

- A mirror
- A good light source
- Dilator
- Lubricating gel
- Clean valve and introducer
- Gel caps and loading tool kit
- Micropore tape
- Drink of water
- Soft toothbrush
- Tissues

To remove your valve which requires cleaning

- Make sure your hands are thoroughly clean.
- Put lubricating gel on the dilator and keep it within easy reach.
- Remove micropore tape from tab.
- Swallow and then hold your tongue between your teeth to prevent you swallowing again.
- Hold the tab and pull firmly to remove the valve, being sure not to swallow until the dilator is in place.
- Insert dilator immediately and secure with micropore tape.
- Leave the dilator fully inserted for 10 to 15 minutes.
- Using an old toothbrush clean your valve and introducer with soap and warm water.
- Leave to soak in Milton sterilizing solution overnight.
- Rinse thoroughly, dry and store.

To insert your clean valve

- Squeeze the new valve gently along the shaft to check that the ‘flapper’ part of the valve is opening. The ‘flapper’ should lie flat at rest.
- Load the valve into the gel cap (see “loading your exdwelling valve into a gel cap” information sheet).
- Insert introducer into the valve and secure tab to introducer.
- Swallow and then hold your tongue between your teeth to prevent you swallowing again.
- Remove the dilator, being sure not to swallow until the valve is in place.
- Apply lubricating gel to the tip of the gel capped valve.
- Immediately line up the tip of the valve with face of puncture and push the valve into the puncture until you feel it is firmly in place.
- Hold the valve in position of complete insertion for a minimum of three minutes to allow the gel cap to dissolve.
- Swallow saliva or warm water to speed up the dissolving of the gel cap.
- To check the valve is fully inserted, gently rotate the valve whilst it is on the introducer. It should rotate easily if not, wait for another minute then try again.

- If ok, take the valve off the introducer whilst holding the tab. Pull on the tab gently. You should feel resistance of the retention collar.
- Tape tab securely to the neck.
- Take a few sips of water.
- Look carefully to check there is no leakage through the **middle** of the valve. If there is leakage, remove the valve, insert the dilator and repeat the above steps using a new valve.

Note

- A little leakage **around** the valve is usually noticed immediately after a change. It should stop after a short time.
- If you have difficulty inserting the valve, repeat the above steps, leaving the dilator in place for at least 15 minutes before reinserting the valve.
- If you continue to have difficulties, insert the dilator and ask a friend, neighbour, family member to contact the Head and Neck Speech and Language Therapy Team to arrange an appointment.

More information

For more information, contact:

Head and Neck Speech and Language Therapy Team

University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire

024 7696 6449

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