

# CARE OF YOUR LARYNGECTOMY STOMA

## LARYNGECTOMY HOME CARE

### **OBSERVATION**

Check the area around the stoma and inside the wall of your trachea for mucus and crusts that may have formed overnight. You will need a flashlight and a mirror to look in your stoma. Do this in the morning and evening. Make this a regular routine.

### **CLEANING**

Gently wash the skin around the opening with mild soap and water and wipe dry. If your stoma is kept clean and free from secretions, your skin will not become dry or irritated.

### **HUMIDIFICATION AND SALINE SPRAY**

Until your airway is well healed and you are used to breathing dry air, use a saline spray to keep your stoma moist. Use the spray, *1 to 3 sprays* into your stoma, *every 2-3 hours* to keep your airway clean and moist. Only you can tell if your secretions are easy to cough out and your airway is clean, pink, and glistening.

Since the air you breathe does not pass through your body's natural moistening system (your nose and mouth), it is important to humidify the air you breathe. This extra humidity helps prevent stoma crusting, eases breathing, and reduces coughing.

If possible have a humidifier in your bedroom, since the stoma tends to crust and dry more at night. Warm or cool humidification is your personal preference. Keep the equipment clean to prevent infections.

Wearing a stoma cover helps keep your stoma clean, dust free, and retains moisture.

### **REMOVING CRUSTS OR PLUGS OF MUCUS**

If there is mucus in the stoma, try to cough it out. Use your saline spray or, try applying a warm, damp cloth over the stoma. Try running hot water in a sink, lean over and through your stoma inhale the steam. A steamy shower is wonderful, but do protect your stoma with a washcloth or shower shield.

### **COVERING**

Covering your stoma helps keep it clean and healthy by preventing dust particles from entering your airway. It also retains the warmth in the air you breathe.

A stoma cover can be tied around your neck. A crocheted bib is popular and can be obtained through the American Cancer Society or laryngectomy association. You can make your own. You can also wear scarves, a turtle neck or jewelry to cover your stoma. Some people like to wear cotton U-neck undershirts.

For shirts that button, you can unbutton the second button (and sew a new button on the outside) so you have an opening to insert a handkerchief for coughing.

## **SHOWERING BATHING AND SHAMPOOING**

Showering and bathing make you feel better and can add important extra humidity for your stoma. You should prevent excess soap and water from entering your stoma. Use a chest high shower spray or shower hose. Some people use a stoma shield, but most like to use a damp-dry cloth over the stoma. Some people cup their hand over their stoma and put their back to the showerhead.

Because your sense of smell is different, attention to personal hygiene is important.

## **PRECAUTIONS**

*Shaving:* If you lather, be careful not to get soap in your stoma. Also be careful of aerosol sprays, or aerosol deodorant sprays. This may be very irritating to your airway. Use them carefully. Your neck may be numb for a few months after surgery, so be careful not to accidentally nick your neck without knowing.

*Sunbathing:* Avoid the sun around scar tissue. Always use sun screen and protective clothing. Always wear a hat when you are outdoors and in the sun.

Use *stoma covers:* to protect against dirt, dust, bugs, cold winter air and hot dry air. You can purchase stoma covers in many sizes and thickness.

*Blankets and covers:* Your natural instinct will prevent blankets from covering your stoma, much like you do with your nose and mouth before laryngectomy.

## **DO'S AND DON'TS FOR LARYNGECTOMY PATIENTS**

### **DO LEARN TO KEEP YOUR STOMA CLEAN**

The inside of your stoma should be clean, moist, and glistening. It should look like the inside of your mouth. Saline spray or drops to help keep it moist are very important.

### **DO LEARN TO KEEP THE TUBE CLEAN**

*Not all people wear a tube.* If you do, follow your physician's and nurses direction for its care. See attached information if you do wear a tube.

### **DO COVER THE STOMA WHEN OUTDOORS**

Use gauze, cotton, or crocheted covers.

### **DO EXERCISE MODERATION--IN EVERYTHING YOU DO**

But DO exercise, walking is great!

### **DO DRESS COMFORTABLY**

Allow for circulation of air, increased coughing and protection of clothing from coughing and secretions.

### **DO COVER YOUR STOMA WHEN COUGHING, SNEEZING**

Use tissues or handkerchiefs to pick up any normal mucus that is expelled.

### **DO WEAR IDENTIFICATION**

You should carry medical identification. It is available from the American Cancer Society, Medic Alert and or your physician.

### **DO HAVE REGULAR EXAMS**

Regular exams with your primary doctor and your ENT doctor keep you healthy.

### **DO NOT ALLOW WATER TO ENTER YOUR STOMA**

Do not swim unless you use a Larchel snorkel, which will help protect your airway. Use care in bathing, shaving. Use a shower shield or a moist towel to cover your stoma. Showers with extra humidity are important and helpful.

### **DO NOT FEAR SLEEPING**

Instinct will work for you when you are asleep

### **DON'T INHALE SMOKE, DUST OR IRRITATING FUMES**

A comfortable clean area that has a medium amount of humidity is good. Stoma covers are important for cleanliness.

### **DON'T ALLOW HAIR, THREADS, DUST TO BE INHALED**

Warn your hairdresser or barber. Be alert yourself for loose threads buttons and excess dust. Your natural cough is a normal and good protection.

**DON'T ALLOW YOUR HOME TO DRY OUT**

Use saline squirted into your stoma to keep it moist and clean. Use saline squirts, spray bottles, or droppers. Use extra humidity in your home. A simple bedside humidifier is great

**DO GET INVOLVED IN YOUR LOCAL LARYNGECTOMY SUPPORT CLUB**

You can purchase stoma shields and stoma covers from many stores look on the internet and the IAL web site. Look at the web site for your laryngectomy club or the cancer society.

**SUPPLIES AND STOMA COVERS**

Dean Rosecrans	Edmund Lauder
PO Box 710 Nampa Idaho 83651 1-800 237-3699 1-800 522-4425 Ask for a free sample kit as a new laryngectomy	Lauder Enterprises 11115 Whisper Hollow San Antonio Texas 78230-3609 210-492-0864 phone 210 492-1584 fax 1-800-388-8642
<a href="http://www.deanrosecrans.com">www.deanrosecrans.com</a>	<a href="http://www.voicestore.com">www.voicestore.com</a> lauder@voicestore.com

**Use a Medic Alert bracelet  
1-800-432-5378**

**DON'T BE A RECLUSE  
GET OUT AND ENJOY LIFE**

**LARYNGECTOMEES ARE QUIET FOR ONLY A SHORT  
TIME**

## **SALINE AT HOME**

### **Equipment**

1. Saucepan 1 quart
2. Metal tongs
3. Clean glass jar with lid
4. Table salt 1 tsp
5. Tap water

### **Preparation**

1. Place jar, lid and metal tongs in saucepan
2. Allow handle
3. Fill the pan with tap water to cover the jar.
4. Boil the water for 30 minutes
5. After it has boiled to 30 minutes, allow it to cool until you can touch the tongs
6. Pick up the jar with the tongs and place it on a table.
7. Measure one teaspoon of salt and place it in the jar
8. Using the tongs, place the lid on the jar.
9. Tighten the lid and shake the solution to mix thoroughly
10. Store the solution in a refrigerator and use for 3 days
11. Instill saline solution using a standard eyedropper or atomizer.
12. Discard the unused portion after three 3 days
13. Make more saline as you need.