

## Speaking Valve

### Speaking Valve

A speaking valve is used to help people with tracheostomies (trach) speak. This one-way valve connects to the outside opening of the trach tube and allows air to pass into the trach, but not out through it. The valve opens when you breathe in. When you breathe out, the valve closes and air flows around the trach tube and up through the vocal cords. This allows sounds to be made. You will breathe out through the mouth and nose instead of the trach.

Some people quickly adjust to breathing with the valve in place. Others may need to slowly increase the time the valve is worn. Breathing out around the trach tube is more work than breathing out through the trach tube. You may need to build up an ability to use the valve. Many people can use the speaking valve all day.

**Type of Speaking Valve:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Frequency of Use:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Benefits of the Speaking Valve

- Restores the upper airway to promote a normal way of breathing
- Allows you to speak
- Increased sense of smell
- Increased sense of taste
- Helps you manage your mucus
- Improves swallowing
- Helps in the process of getting out trach tube
- Improves quality of life

### Equipment

- Speaking valve chosen by your provider
- A syringe (if you have a cuffed trach tube)
- Suction supplies

### How to Use the Speaking Valve

1. Wash hands.
2. Suction the mouth and trach tube. You may not be able to use the valve if you have a lot of mucus or very thick mucus.
3. If the trach tube has a cuff, make sure to deflate the cuff with a syringe before putting the speaking valve on the trach. **The valve must not be used on trach tubes that have the cuff inflated.**
4. Place speaking valve on the trach tube hub.
5. Once the session is complete, remove the speaking valve (and adapters if used) and replace with setup used before the speaking valve was placed.
6. Clean speaking valve after use.

### Safety Guidelines

- Do not wear the valve when sleeping or during intense physical activity in which you are breathing hard.
- You should only wear the valve when supervised or instructed by trained medical providers in taking on/off the speaking valve and given permission to use on your own or with family members.
- **Remove the valve right away if you have trouble breathing.**
- **Do not use the valve on trach tubes that have the cuff inflated.**

## How to Clean Your Speaking Valve

1. The valve should be cleaned daily.
2. Using a mild soap, swish speaking valve and parts in soapy warm water. See instructions on inside of storage container.
3. If the trach tube has a cuff, make sure to deflate the cuff with a syringe before putting the speaking valve on the trach. **The valve must not be used on trach tubes that have the cuff inflated.**
4. Place speaking valve on the trach tube hub.
5. Rinse well with sterile water (if the valve is not totally clean of soap, the valve may get sticky).
6. Allow the valve and parts to air dry well before using again.
7. **Do not use: hot water, alcohol, peroxide, bleach, or ethylene oxide to clean. It will destroy the rubber valve.**
8. If the speaking valve becomes sticky, noisy, vibrates or cause increased resistance on inspiration before or after two months, the speaking valve should be replaced.

## Tips

- Humidity can be used with the valve in place.
- Oxygen can be given with the valve in place.
- Remove the valve during breathing treatments. If it is left on, remove it and rinse it to remove any medicines that could cause the valve to stick or not work well.

## Resources

- [https://hopkinsmedicine.org/tracheostomy/living/passey-muir\\_valve.html](https://hopkinsmedicine.org/tracheostomy/living/passey-muir_valve.html)
- <http://passy-muir.com/>

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 8/2019 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#8033.