

FACT SHEET



Things to remember about your laryngectomy stoma



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Top Tips

- You should wear a stoma protector or filter system which will heat and moisten your mucus, helping to keep it thin and also filter out the dust and dirt in the air. While you are in hospital your nurse will discuss this with you and show you how to use them.
- Remember that during the summer time there are more flies, wasps, blossom, leaves and dust in the air which may present a hazard to the unprotected stoma.
- Never cut-up small pieces of gauze to clean around the stoma as fragments may fall into the stoma and be very irritating.
- Try to use good quality tissues as those of poor quality disintegrate when moist and parts can be inhaled.
- Do not use sponge tipped swabs to clean the stoma as there is risk of the tip falling off and being inhaled.
- Do not use cotton wool as small fibres may be inhaled causing irritation in the airway which is often difficult to relieve. Be careful when using cotton buds around the stoma and make sure they are moistened first so that small fibres are not inhaled.
- You need to take care not to get water into your stoma as it will go straight into your lungs. Take care when bathing, you may wish to ask a relative or friend to help you wash your hair.
- You can use a plastic shower shield to protect your stoma when showering and shaving etc. These are available on prescription.
- Shower attachments may also be used with baseplates and filter systems and your nurse will advise you on what to use.
- **Do not go swimming** unless you have the correct breathing equipment and have had lessons in how to use it - your local laryngectomy support group may advise you on this.
- Take care not to spray aerosols such as polish, perfume etc. too near the stoma area as this may irritate your airway causing coughing.
- During hot weather take care to protect your skin from harmful effects of the sun - a sunburnt stoma is very painful!
- While on the beach take care not to get sand in the stoma. Remember that it gets windy on the beach so protect that stoma!
- It may be useful for your friends or relatives to know how to give resuscitation in case of an emergency. If you have any questions regarding this then your nurse will be able to help you. Countrywide Supplies provide an emergency card upon request, you should carry this with you.

FACT SHEET SERIES

This FACT SHEET was written by the ENT/Maxillofacial Dept.
Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham
Compiled by Countrywide Supplies Ltd.

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Post 32 Meadow Road

Netherfield

Nottingham

NG4 2FR

Countrywide Supplies Ltd

0800 783 1659

For your Laryngectomy, Tracheostomy and Stoma Prescription Supplies