Speech and Language Therapy

Checklist for increasing the life of a speaking valve

Information for patients
The most common cause for a valve to leak is the formation of Candida on the back of the valve. Candida is a fungus and grows when in a warm moist, slightly acidic environment. This Candida can coat the valve and cause it to not function properly.

People who have had a laryngectomy are more likely to have acid reflux (acid from the stomach coming back up). This is because the sphincter at the top of the oesophagus is no longer there. Candida grows in an acid environment and therefore laryngectomees often have more Candida than usual.

The following advice will help to reduce the growth of Candida.
Try to reduce acid reflux by:

• Avoid eating late at night, sleep with your head propped up, and reduce the amount of spicy or sweet foods.

• Are you on anti reflux medication? If not, we may suggest you talk to your GP about this. It may also be helpful to take Gaviscon Advance at night.

• Make sure you drink water after food.

• Clean the valve at least twice a day but not too vigorously.

• Manufacturers recommend the use of a flushing device. We can show you how to use this.

We also recommend taking an antifungal treatment to stop the candida from growing:

• Use 50mg Miconazole Tablet (Loramyc) once a day.

• Take it in the morning after cleaning your teeth.

• Place the rounded side of the tablet in the mouth between the gum and the cheek just above the incisor tooth. Hold it in place for about 30 seconds then leave it there.

• Do not suck, chew or swallow or touch the tablet. Do not chew gum.

• Allow it to dissolve slowly.

• Use opposite sides of the mouth on alternate days.

• If accidentally swallowed, don’t worry. Drink some water and replace the tablet if swallowed within 6 hours of putting it in.
Questions or concerns?
If you have any question or concerns, please telephone the Speech Therapy office on **01865 231205**.