

## Tracheoesophageal Voice Prosthesis (TEP) Home Care

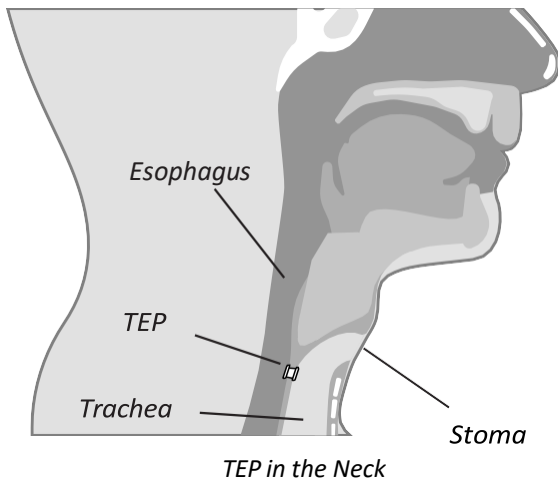
### How do I take care of my TEP?

You need to clean your TEP when you wake up, after you eat, and if your voice starts to sound different. Your speech therapist will give you a small brush to clean your TEP.

1. Put the tip of the cleaning brush through your stoma and into the center of your TEP.
2. Gently twist the brush. **Do not push the brush in and out.**

Rotate your TEP every day with tweezers or a pair of small surgical clips (called a hemostat).

1. Insert the tweezers or hemostat into your stoma and grab the edge of the TEP.
2. Spin it left or right.
3. Check the skin around your TEP. If the skin around it starts to look red and swollen, or if the skin starts to grow over the TEP, you may need to rotate it more often.
4. Call your speech therapist if you have a lot of skin growing over your TEP.



### TEP Problems

You need the following items in case you have a problem with your TEP:

- A plug
- A red tube (called a catheter)

You can get these from your speech therapist or you can order them online. Ask your care team for more information.

**Leaking.** If it feels like food and liquids go “down the wrong pipe” when you eat and drink, your TEP may be leaking. To check for a leak, drink a little water and use a mirror and flashlight to look into your stoma. If you see water dripping from the TEP, you have a leak.

*If your TEP is leaking from the middle:*

- Try cleaning it with the brush. If this doesn't help, call your speech therapist to get a new TEP.
- Before you get another TEP, you may have a hard time swallowing liquids. When you drink, put the plug in your TEP to keep liquid out of your windpipe.  
*NOTE: You will not be able to talk with the plug in place.*

*If your TEP is leaking from the edges:*

- Call your speech therapist to get a new TEP.
- Before you get another TEP, you may have a hard time swallowing liquids. Thicken the liquids you drink with a thickener (you can find these at any pharmacy) or drink naturally thicker liquids such as tomato juice and fruit nectars.
- Use a pencil to gently apply pressure to your TEP when you drink. This helps make a better seal.

**Falling out.** Very rarely, TEPs fall out. If you swallow your TEP or cough it out, call your speech therapist for a new one.

Until you get another TEP, insert the red catheter where your TEP was. Make sure you tie a knot in the end of the catheter.

**If you think the TEP went into your lungs or are unsure, go to the emergency room for a chest x-ray.**  
 Call your speech therapist to tell them what happened.

**Questions? Please call your speech therapist:**