



Information for  
patients and  
carers

**Guidelines for use of oral  
suctioning for adults in the  
community**

## Introduction

Many people need to use a suction machine to help clear the excess saliva in the mouth. This leaflet is to support those using a suction machine. Oral suctioning (suction in the mouth) is used to clear secretions from the mouth only and must not be used for clearing saliva any further than the back of the teeth.

This leaflet offers general advice on the suction units but there are many different types available. Machines should always be supplied with manufacturer's instructions. Please consult these for specific guidance on cleaning, changing the filter and maintenance of the device that you have.

It is important if you are helping someone use the suction or doing it for them that consent is gained where possible and you discussed and agreed upon how the person receiving the suction can stop the procedure at any point.

### Indications for suctioning:

- Visible secretions in the mouth
- As part of mouth care for people with a poor swallow
- Excessive saliva production
- Gurgling sounds whilst breathing which may indicate secretions have pooled

### Equipment needed:

- Suction unit
- Suction tubing
- Yankauer (this is a hard plastic tube which is attached to the end of the suction tubing and inserted into the mouth)

- Clean water to clean tubing and yankauer following the procedure
- Gloves and disposable aprons are not essential, but you may choose to use them
- Any personal protective equipment (e.g., gloves, goggles/visor, apron)

## Procedure

1. Prepare the Equipment, ensuring charged if using on battery as demonstrated by the person who has taught you to use the machine, refer also to the trust video training video (link below)
2. Wash your hands before the procedure and use appropriate personal protective equipment
3. Switch the suction unit on and check pressures as advised by clinicians

The pressure should be around **15-18 kPa (112-135 mmHg)**.

Remember to check the pressure by removing the yankauer and placing your thumb over the end of the tubing the end of the tube

4. If you are helping someone with suction, ensure they are happy for you to carry on
5. Introduce the yankauer to the side of the mouth
6. Sweep the yankauer over the tongue, no deeper than the back of the teeth
7. Look into the mouth where possible during the procedure to make sure the yankauer is in the correct place. This is to avoid damage to your mouth
8. Keep the yankauer always moving slowly around the mouth

9. Remove the yankauer from the mouth and rinse out in clean water
10. Look into the mouth to see if it is clear
11. Repeat the procedure as required, making sure there are adequate breaks between suction
12. Once you have finished suctioning, clean the yankauer and tubing thoroughly. This is done by suctioning clean water through the yankauer and tubing. Empty the suction bottle as required and wash your hands/removing personal protective equipment. Please follow manufacturer's instructions for cleaning the machine and container

## Additional recommendations

- If there is any evidence of bleeding or sore gums then use the suction with caution
- If the secretions change, in terms of thickness, colour or volume then please contact GP
- Oral suction is normally very safe but if you see or experience gagging/vomiting, distress, increased breathing rate or difficulty in breathing then stop the procedure and seek medical advice
- Both the yankauer and the tubing can be reused frequently. It would probably be recommended to change both the yankauer and tubing monthly as long as it is cleaned and stored properly. If cleaning does not remove the debris, then it is recommended to change the tubing and yankauer more frequently

Please refer to manufacturer's instructions for further information.

## Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact:

MND Team: 01772 522545 / [MNDteam@lthtr.nhs.uk](mailto:MNDteam@lthtr.nhs.uk)

Long-term Ventilation Team: 01772 522340 / [ccventilation@lthtr.nhs.uk](mailto:ccventilation@lthtr.nhs.uk)

## Sources of further information

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

Lancashire and South Cumbria Care and Research centre's suction instruction video link & QR code:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IlbjMrleU5w>



Health Education England, 'Mouth care matters: Safe oral suctioning with neuro-disability': <http://mouthcarematters.hee.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2019/09/10-RHN-FS-Safe-Oral-Suctioning-in-Adults-with-a-Neuro-disability.pdf>

MNDA: Oral Suction for motor neurone disease:

<https://www.mndassociation.org/app/uploads/Information-sheet-P9-Oral-suction.pdf>

All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets)

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Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free site. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on any of our premises, either inside or outside the buildings. Our staff will ask you about your smoking status when you come to hospital and will offer you support and advice about stopping

smoking this will include Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage your symptoms of withdrawal and the opportunity to speak to a nurse or advisor from the specialist Tobacco and Alcohol Care Team.

If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact the Quit Squad Freephone 0800 328 6297.

Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages.

**Gujarati:**

આ માહિતીને સમજવામાં સહાયતા જોઈતી હોય તો કૃપા કરીને પૂછો. આ માહિતી મોટા છપાણા માં અને અન્ય ભાષામાં ઉપલબ્ધ કરી શકાય છે.

**Romanian:**

Vă rugăm să întrebați dacă aveți nevoie de ajutor pentru înțelegerea acestor informații. Aceste informații pot fi puse la dispoziție în format mare și în alte limbi.”

**Polish:**

Poinformuj nas, jeśli potrzebna jest ci pomoc w zrozumieniu tych informacji. Informacje te można również udostępnić dużym drukiem oraz w innych językach

**Punjabi:**

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਸਮਝਣ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮਦਦ ਲੈਣੀ ਚਾਹੋਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਰਿਖਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੁੱਛੋ। ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਵੱਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮੁਹੱਈਆ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

**Urdu:**

دوسری زبانوں اور بڑی اگر آپ کو ہی معلومات سمجھنے کے لیے مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو  
یہی چھپا میں یہی ابی دست ہو سکت ہے براے مہر میں پوے چھہی۔ معلومات

**Arabic:**

مطبوعه بأحر فكبيرة وبلغات إذا كنت تريد مساعده في فهم هذه لمعلومات يرجى أن تطلب  
أخرى يمانن تو فسير هذه المعلومات

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**Division:** Medicine

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