

Information for patients and carers

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

Decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of three horizontal, wavy bands of blue color, transitioning from a lighter blue at the top to a darker blue at the bottom.

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 suctions.

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

Long-term Ventilation Team: **01772 522340** / lccventilation@lthtr.nhs.uk

Sources of further information

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

<https://vimeo.com/415457506/3b0351ba71>



www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware

<https://bepartofresearch.nihr.ac.uk/>

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/sites/default/files/2023-03/P9%20Oral%20suction.pdf>

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If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**

Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.

This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.

Our patient information group review our leaflets regularly, if you feel you would like to feedback on this information or join our reading group please contact on email address:

patientexperienceandinvolvem@LTHTR.nhs.uk

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