

Artificial Larynx (AL): What is an Artificial Larynx?

NOTE: Before using any AL device, read the manufacturers' instructions for use carefully.

What is an Artificial Larynx (AL)?

An artificial larynx, or electrolarynx (EL), is an electronic device that makes sound for you to produce speech.

Why Do I Need an Artificial Larynx?

You may choose to use your artificial larynx as your primary way of communicating or use it as a backup or temporary means of communication. Many begin using it right after surgery before they are healed enough to begin using tracheoesophageal (TE) and/or esophageal speech.

Why Do I Still Need an AL if I Plan to Use Esophageal or Tracheoesophageal (TE) Speech?

- To communicate immediately after your surgery while you are healing.
- To communicate while you are learning to produce esophageal or tracheoesophageal speech.
- As a backup in case your other form of communication fails.
- The AL may be a way of being heard over the noise of a crowd.
- The AL may be an easier way to communicate if you are sick and unable to use your esophageal or TE voice.

How Does an AL Work?

When sound moves into your mouth, you can form sounds into words using your lips, teeth and tongue. There are two ways the artificial larynx (AL) is used. One way is placing the AL on your neck and the sound moves through your neck tissues into your mouth. Sometimes it is hard for sound to move through the neck tissues due to swelling and/or the stiffness of the neck tissues after radiation therapy or surgery. In this case, you would place an Oral Adapter with an Oral Straw onto the end of your AL. You then place the Oral Straw into your mouth and the sound goes right into your mouth.

Refer to your clinician or the "Topic 9: Artificial Larynx: Basic Training" CareTips Sheet for further instruction.

