

Specific COVID-19 precautions for people who have undergone Laryngectomy

The SARS-CoV-2 virus is most commonly spread from an infected person to others through:

- Aerosolized droplets in the air by coughing and sneezing and rarely, fecal contamination
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching the stoma, mouth, nose, or eyes before washing hands.
- It is not yet known if laryngectomees are more susceptible to COVID-19. It is therefore prudent to be extra careful. There are several risk factors that place laryngectomees at increased risk of getting infected.
- Because laryngectomees inhale through their stoma the virus can get direct access to the lungs without going through the mouth or nose.
- Laryngectomees could become infected in either the nose, the stoma/lungs or both.

Laryngectomees can protect themselves by:

- Avoiding close contact with sick people.
- Avoiding crowded public places and avoid leaving home except for essential/urgent trips
- Avoid touching the stoma, HME, eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Frequent hand hygiene when using a hand for tracheoesophageal speech
 - Wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
 - Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content only if soap and water are unavailable.
- Use hand hygiene before/after
 - touching the stoma,
 - removing and replacing the HME
- **Wearing HME filter 24/7** especially when being around other people:
 - **Provox Micron™ HME** has a greater filtering ability and is recommended to reduce the risk of inhaling the virus
 - The **HME should ideally be fitted on a baseplate stoma dressing** instead of a LaryTube™. (The baseplate + HME may provide a seal around the stoma to keep airflow through the HME)
 - Change the HME filter when soiled or when exposed to external droplets. Avoid washing and reusing the same HME filter
- Wearing a cloth/fabric mask or a regular stoma scarf over your stoma to provide additional protection for the baseplate and HME filter. Cloth/Fabric masks and stoma scarfs should be washed daily in the hottest water available, and dried at the highest temperature setting.
- If you use an electrolarynx, wipe it frequently with Lysol or Clorox wipes.

COVID-19 Testing:

- If you require testing for COVID-19, you should expect the swab tests to be done taking 2 samples, one from the stoma and one from the nose.