

What is an electrolarynx?

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

Why do I need an electrolarynx?

You may choose to use your electrolarynx 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 electrolarynx 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 EL may be a way of being heard over the noise of a crowd
- The EL may be an easier way to communicate if you are sick and unable to use your esophageal or TE voice

How does an electrolarynx work?

When sound moves into your mouth, you can form sounds into words using your lips, teeth and tongue. There are two ways the EL is used. One way is placing the EL 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 tube onto the end of your EL. You then place the oral tube into your mouth and the sound goes right into your mouth.

Refer to your clinician or “Topic 9: Basic training - Electrolarynx (EL)” CareTips sheet for further instruction.

NOTE: Before using any electrolarynx device, read the manufacturer’s Instructions for Use carefully.

