

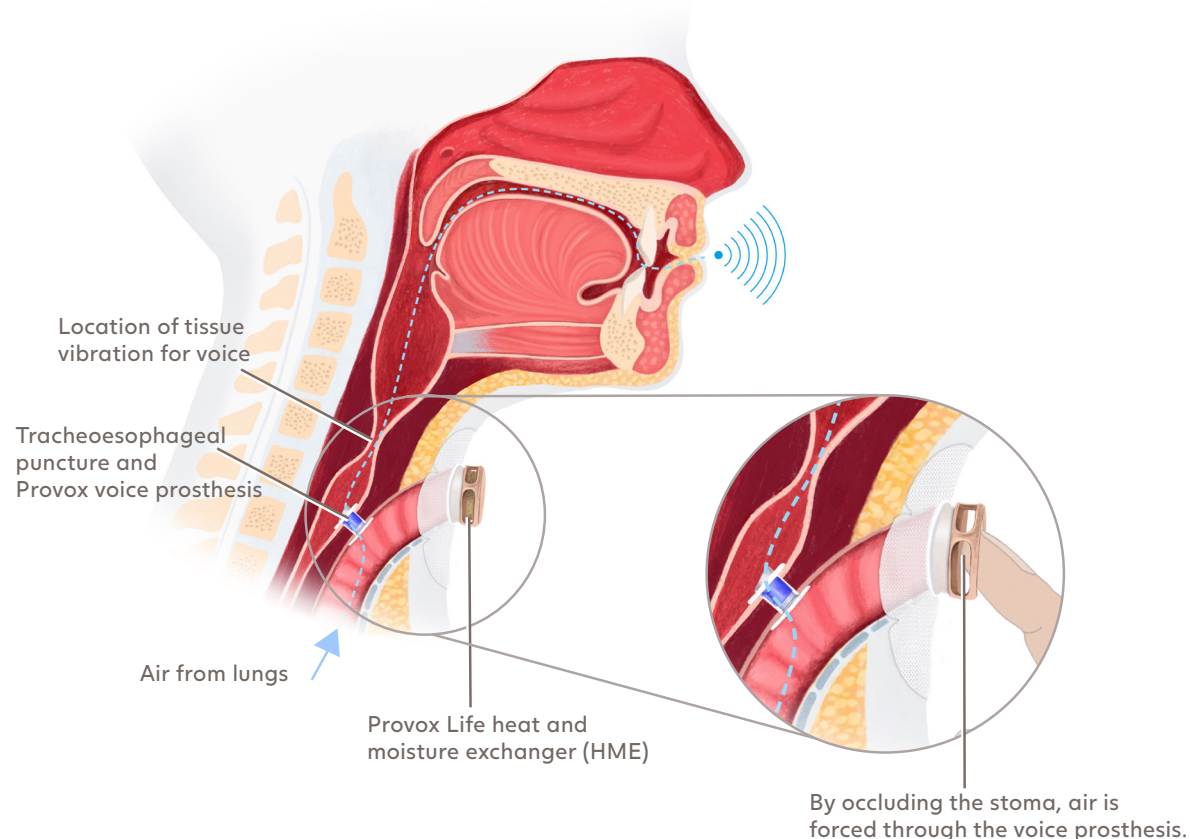
Using a voice prosthesis (VP) to speak, known as tracheoesophageal (TE) speech, requires coordinating breathing with stomal occlusion and articulation.

The voice prosthesis consists of a one-way valve, valve shaft, and tracheal and esophageal flanges. It is positioned between the trachea (windpipe) and the esophagus (food tube).

The valve opens when speaking and closes when swallowing. When the stoma is covered,

air from the lungs flows through the prosthesis into the esophagus, causing muscles to vibrate and create sound. This sound is shaped into words by moving our articulators (tongue, lips, etc.) to produce TE speech.

The prosthesis typically needs clinician replacement every few months.



Speaking with a Voice Prosthesis:

Occluding your stoma using a heat and moisture exchanger (HME)

▶ **BREATHE** Take a comfortable breath before speaking

▶ **PRESS** the HME with your finger to occlude the stoma.

- Avoid air escaping from around your stoma by pressing the HME fully and evenly.
- Avoid extraneous head and body movement.
- Use good eye contact when speaking.
- Keep your arm and other fingers flat on your chest.

▶ **SPEAK:** Say sounds, words, phrases, sentences, etc.

▶ **PRACTICE** coordination

- Breathe in, occlude stoma, start speaking, stop speaking, release finger from HME.

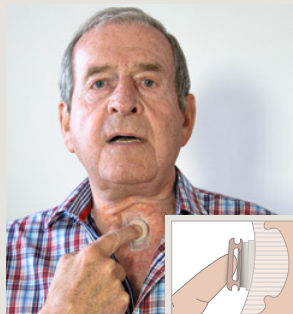
Practice abdominal breathing to improve TE speech

START by holding one hand on your lower belly and keeping the other hand ready at your stoma.

1 BREATHE IN slowly and notice your abdomen expand outward. This will cause your stomach to expand outwards, like blowing up a balloon as your lungs fill with air. Be sure to keep your chest and shoulders relaxed and free of tension.

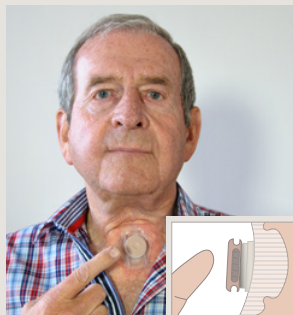
2 OCCLUDE your stoma for voicing.

SAY “ahhh” as you notice the contraction of your abdomen. Keep the sound going for a few seconds using abdominal breath support.



3 REMOVE your finger from your stoma.

4 RELAX your stomach muscles as you inhale through your stoma repeating the steps above.



PRACTICE voicing using abdominal breath support. Notice the rise and fall of your stomach as you say sounds (ahhh, ee, oo).

Practice Sounds and Short Sentences

▶ **PRACTICE** sounds and series of words.

- Count from 1-5 on one breath.
- Say the days of the week, months of the year, and family members’ names one word at a time. Example: breathe in say “one,” breathe in say “two” etc.

▶ **PRACTICE** single words then short phrases and sentences.

“Hello.”

“How are you?”

“Hi there.”

“Who is that?”

▶ **SAY** these sentences, pausing to take a breath at the natural point in the sentence, as shown by the slash / mark.

When I am finished cooking / I will wash the sheets.

For dinner tonight / we will be having chicken.

Don’t forget your umbrella / it is very wet and rainy outside.

▶ **PRACTICE** in front of the mirror to see your how you are pressing on the HME when speaking. Pay attention to placing and removing your finger when speaking. Get a replenishing breath by pausing between words/sentences in conversational speech.

Tips to improve your TE speech:

- Prior to choosing an adhesive or other attachment, it is important to meet with your clinician who can assist you with examining your stoma and selecting the appropriate attachment method for the best seal.
- Vary the finger pressure you use to occlude your stoma. Listen. Is there air escaping underneath the lid of the HME? Use firm and even – but not excessive – finger pressure.

▶ **WATCH** these helpful videos:

How to optimize your voice quality
www.atosmedical.us/videos/how-to-optimize-your-voice-quality



Speaking with a Voice Prosthesis
www.atosmedical.us/videos/speaking-with-a-voice-prosthesis

