



**University Hospitals
Bristol and Weston**
NHS Foundation Trust

Patient information service
Cleft information

What is a nasal obturator?



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A nasal obturator is a prosthesis that helps to stop air escaping out of the nose during speech. Without this, speech can sound nasal and at times weak.

This can affect how easily speech is understood when talking to people, particularly on the phone.

A nasal obturator consists of 2 'plugs' which sit into each nostril. It is made of silicone which is a soft rubber material. There is a small joining bar, connecting each 'plug' that can be used to insert and remove the obturator.



What happens at a speech prosthesis clinic?

You will be invited to a clinic where you will see a specialist speech and language therapist for a speech assessment. This will help determine if you are a suitable candidate for a nasal obturator and what a speech prosthesis may be able to achieve.

With your consent, the speech assessment will be audio recorded.

You will also be seen by a consultant cleft surgeon and/or an orthodontist. They will assess to see if there are any further options to help manage your speech symptoms. This may involve being referred for a videofluoroscopy (X ray) or a nasendoscopy (flexible camera) to look at your soft palate whilst you talk to fully assess its function.

Not all patients will be suitable for surgery. If you are a suitable candidate for this type of prosthesis the orthodontist or surgeon will take an impression of your nose to start the process of making your prosthesis.

This involves putting soft 'putty' into the entrance of your nose and waiting a few minutes for it to set. This should not hurt but may be slightly uncomfortable. If your nasal passages have nasal hair you may wish to remove this before the appointment.

It may take a number of appointments to make and fit the prosthesis so a good fit can be achieved.

Once a good fit has been achieved your speech will be assessed again and the results discussed. A follow up appointment will be made approximately 2 and 6 months following the fitting to review further.

What to expect when you wear a nasal obturator

When you wear your nasal obturator you may not hear a significant difference to your speech straight away. However, over time there are likely to be small changes to how clear your speech sounds.

If you would like to talk about how you are feeling about the obturator before, during or after having it fitted please let us know and we will put you in touch with the cleft psychology service.

When do you wear a nasal obturator?

A nasal obturator is designed to be worn in the day when an improvement in speech is important. For example when speaking to people who you don't normally interact with on the phone, during meetings or at social gatherings.

At all other times the nasal obturator can be removed, for example when eating and drinking, at night and during exercise.

How do I insert and remove a nasal obturator?

A nasal obturator can be inserted using clean fingertips. Gently insert the obturator, do not push further up into the nose. To remove, use the joining bar and gently pull down.

How to look after a nasal obturator

After removing the prosthesis wash it gently under cold or luke warm, soapy water and store it safely in its container.

At night, gently clean the prosthesis with a soft toothbrush and hand soap. Store in its container once it is completely dry.

Avoid contact with heat, such as sunlight or radiators as this can damage the silicone.

Before you fit the obturator, inspect it for any tears or damage. Please stop wearing it and contact us immediately if there is any damage.

The nasal obturator can be small and therefore a choking hazard. Please ensure it is stored safely when not in use.

It is rare for the nasal obturator to move further up the nose if they are joined with the joining bar. If this does happen and you cannot remove it you will need to attend your nearest minor injuries unit or emergency department.

You may find a build up of nasal secretions at the top of the nasal obturator. If this happens you can remove the device and clean it. The nasal obturator should not hurt or rub. If this happens please contact us.

Contact us

Email: ubh-tr.swcleftservice@nhs.net

Telephone: 0117 342 1177

Website: <http://www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/cleft>



Notes

As well as providing clinical care, our Trust has an important role in research. This allows us to discover new and improved ways of treating patients.

While under our care, you may be invited to take part in research. To find out more please visit: www.uhbw.nhs.uk

Help us prevent the spread of infection in hospital. Please make sure your hands are clean. Wash and dry them thoroughly/use the gel provided. If you have been unwell in the last 48 hours please consider whether your visit is essential.

Smoking is the primary cause of preventable illness and premature death. For support in stopping smoking contact **NHS Smokefree on 0300 123 1044.**

Drinkline is the national alcohol helpline. If you're worried about your own or someone else's drinking, you can call this free helpline in complete confidence. **Drinkline on 0300 123 1110.**

For access all patient leaflets and information please go to the following address:
<http://foi.avon.nhs.uk/>

Bristol switchboard: 0117 923 0000
Weston switchboard: 01934 636 363
www.uhbw.nhs.uk



For an interpreter or signer please contact the telephone number on your appointment letter.



For this leaflet in large print or PDF format, please email patientleaflets@uhbw.nhs.uk.

