

STOMA BUTTONS / LARRY BUTTONS.

Stoma buttons have proven to be a valuable aid to laryngectomees particularly if the stoma becomes unstable in size. Also, if a laryngectomee has a sensitive skin, and the wearing of a base plate becomes a problem, some stoma buttons which are available on prescription, can facilitate an HME without the use of a baseplate.

There are a range of sizes available to suit most stoma sizes, but care must be taken before attempting to fit one and the following precautions should be heeded:

- Check with a health care professional for suitability
- Ensure that the stoma button is not too small.
- Check sizes carefully before ordering as sizes can vary depending on manufacturer
- A stoma may be too large to facilitate a button.
- Fitting a stoma button to an irregular or oval shaped stoma may prove to be risky, and the button could easily end up in the trachea.
- Excessive use of lubricating gel when fitting a button can contribute to accidental inhalation.
- The buttons need to be squeezed or folded to fit, and because the silicon material is fairly rigid, it creates a springing effect which can make it difficult to control.
- Laryngectomees should only attempt to fit a button themselves if confident and trained to do so.
- Trying to fit a stoma button whilst wearing a base plate can be a hazardous operation
- Essentially, the diameter of the button should be no smaller than the stoma diameter less 0.5 millimetre, slightly larger may be tolerated if it doesn't hurt when fitted.
- Over time, a stoma may become larger through regularly wearing a button and the need to check button size periodically is important.

The stoma buttons that are designed to facilitate the use of a heat and moisture exchanger cassette (HME) are probably the best choice to use as they have a larger flange, sometimes incorporating larry clip holders and are very safe to use if the correct size is chosen.

Buttons are available in various lengths to accommodate the position of one's prosthesis. If too long the prosthesis may be blocked, however the depth of the stoma may not accommodate a shorter length.

Seek advice from a Health Care Professional before attempting to use a button.

This guidance was written by Ray Mountain, long term stoma button user, and Chairman of **HNChelp** (www.hnchelp.org.uk) for the benefit of Head & Neck support group members. March 26th.2014.

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