

Airway, communication & swallowing:

Considerations of a speech and language therapist

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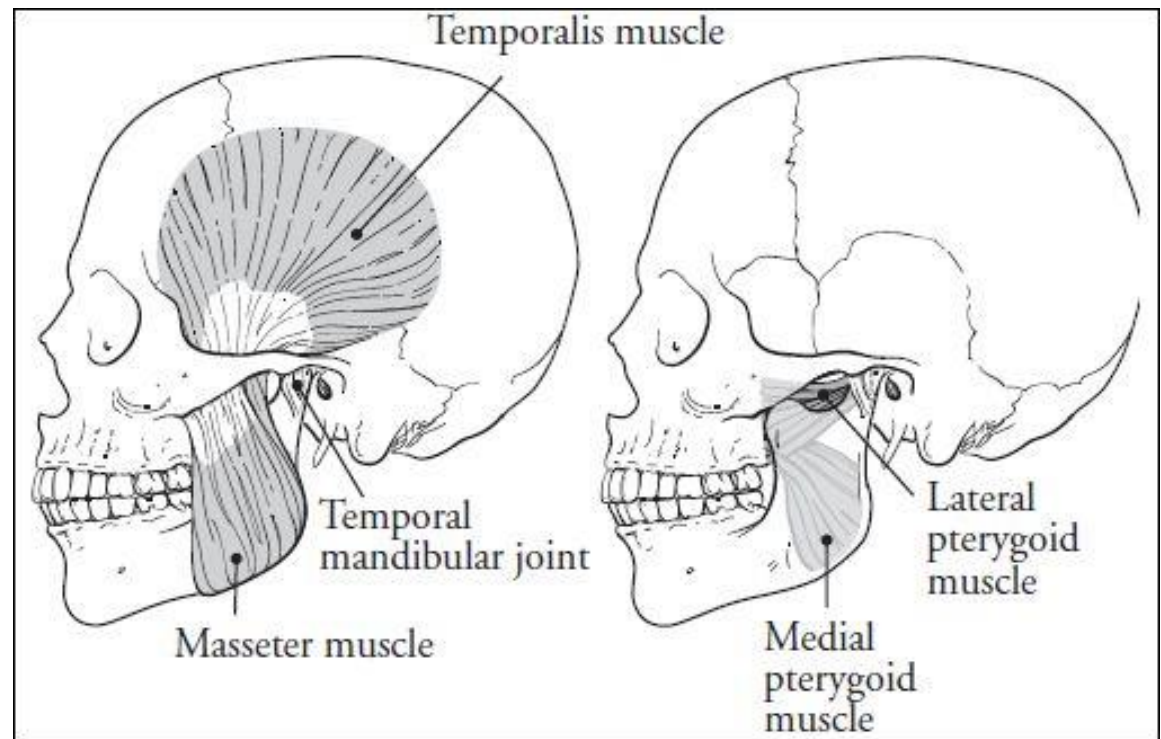
Overview

1. Signs and symptoms
2. Management strategies and red flags



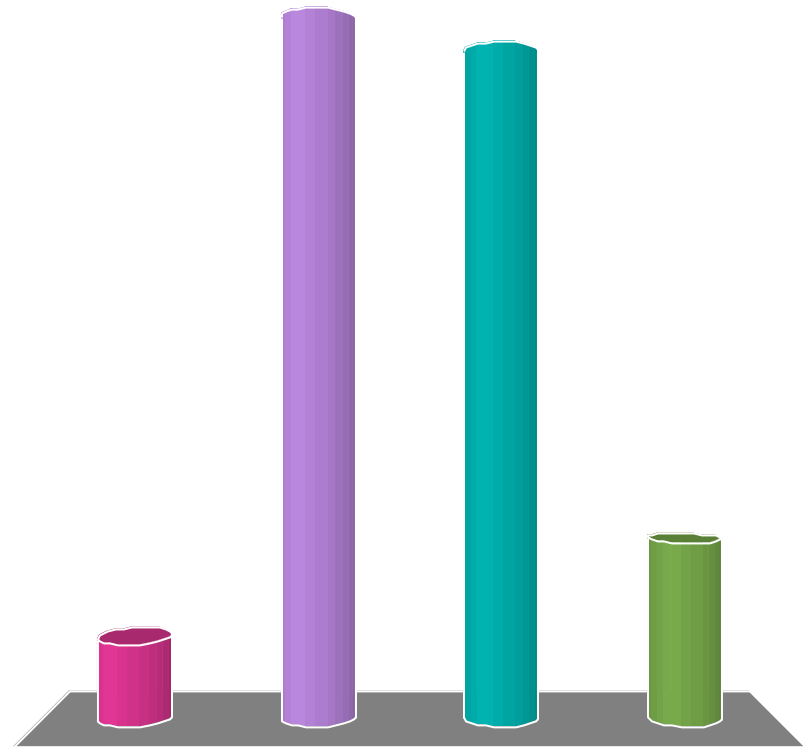
Jaw - trismus

- Chewing
- Speech
- Oral hygiene



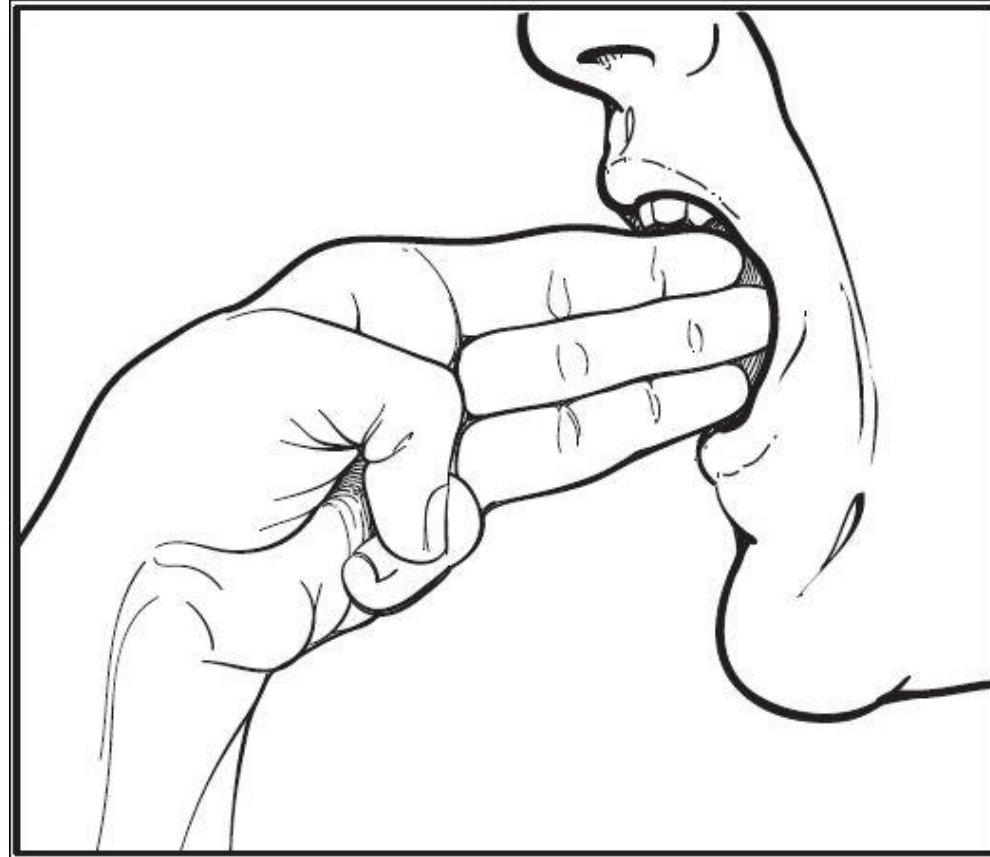
What percentage of patients treated with RT for head and neck cancer experience trismus?

- A. 19-31%
- B. 38-45%
- C. 51-60%
- D. 69-75%



Johnson et al 2013, 2010; Kent et al 2008)

3 finger test



Trismus: Management

- Analgesia
- Gentle mobilisation exercises
- Refer – Oncology MDT



Oral hygiene

- Eating
- Speech
- Infection
- Pain
- Xerostomia



Oral hygiene: management

- Mouth care
- Sipping water
- Artificial saliva products
- Analgesia
- Anti-fungal regime
- Acupuncture
- Dental hygienist



Communication: speech & voice

Speech

- Dry mouth
- Mouth care
- Tongue movements
- Refer to SLT

Voice

- Steam inhalations
- Refer to ENT



Swallowing: survivor perspective

- Unprepared for duration and impact of side effects
- Life after treatment
- Taste and dry mouth
- Swallowing – painful and sensitive
- Chewing problems
- Coughing on drinks
- Loss of smell



(Ganzer et al 2016, Ward et al 2015, Nund et al 2014b)

Coping strategies

- Trial and error
- Food and fluid modification
- Planning ahead
- Avoid problem foods
- Avoid places
- Positive attitude
- Persistence



(Nund et al 2014b)

Swallowing: overt vs silent dysphagia

- Coughing when eating/drinking
- Wet, gurgly voice
- Food sticking
- Recurrent chest infections
- Avoiding public eating
- Avoiding medications
- Avoiding foods/drinks
- Longer mealtimes

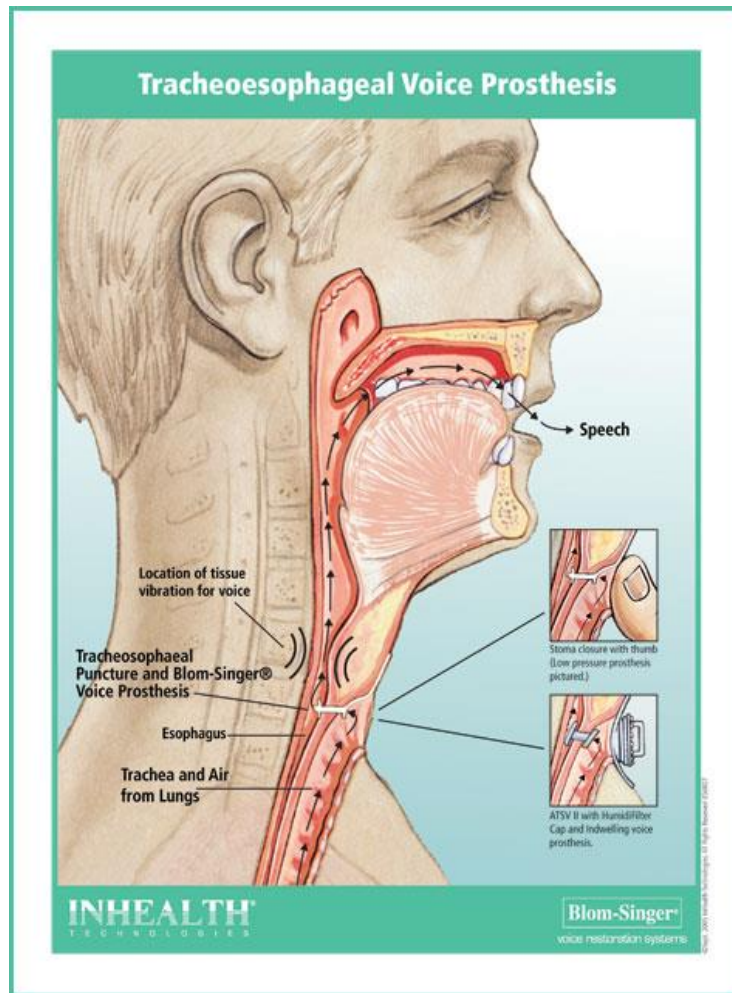


Dysphagia checklist

- Subtle decline vs coping strategies
- Overt vs silent dysphagia signs
- Medication avoidance
- Probing questions
- Dysphagia MDT



Laryngectomy



- Voice prosthesis
- Secretions
- Stoma patency
- Voice
- Swallow

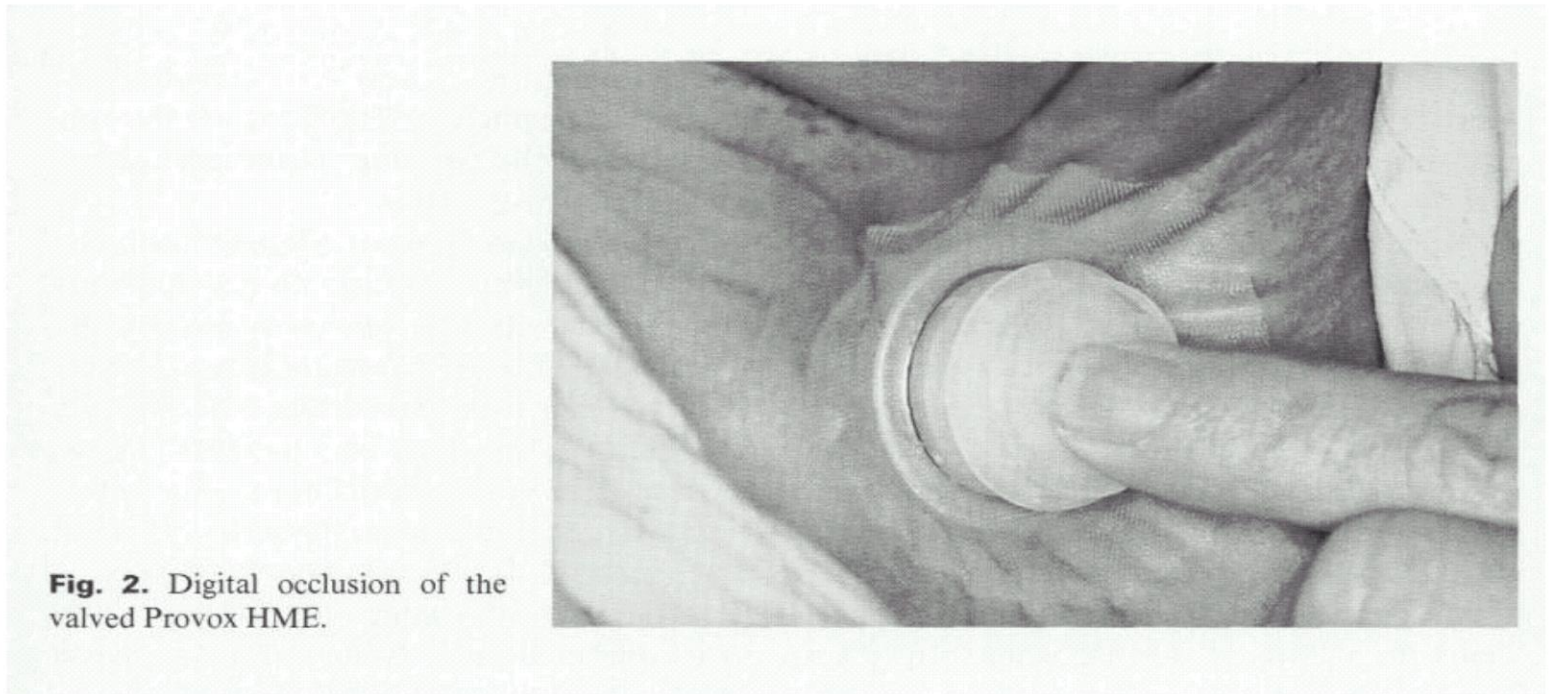


Airway: 1.5cm



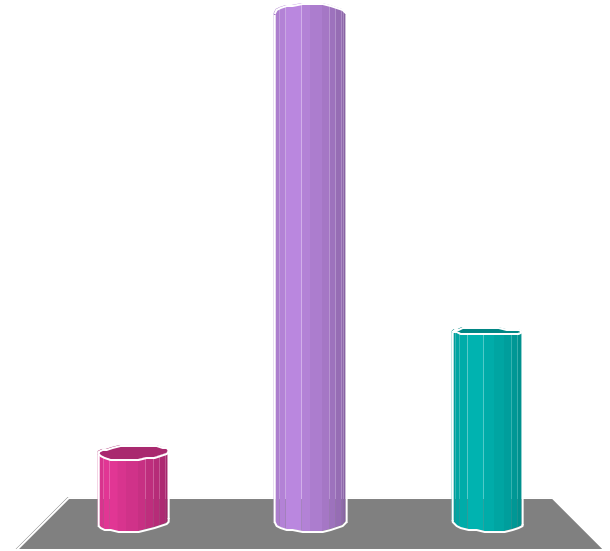
Humidification

Heat Moisture Exchange System

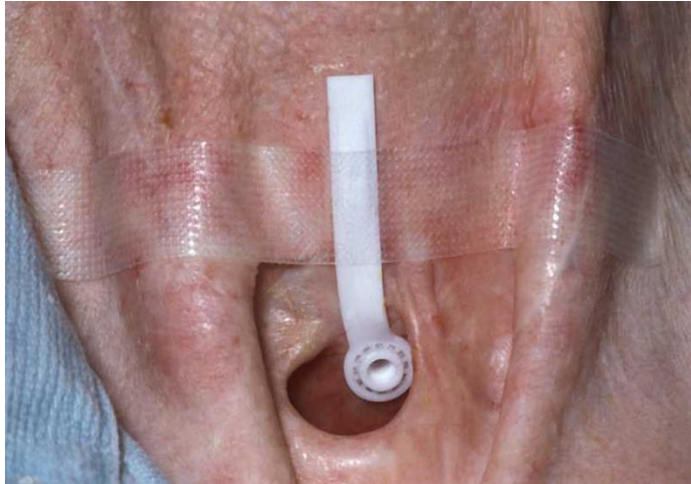


The most common causes of leakage from the voice prosthesis are:

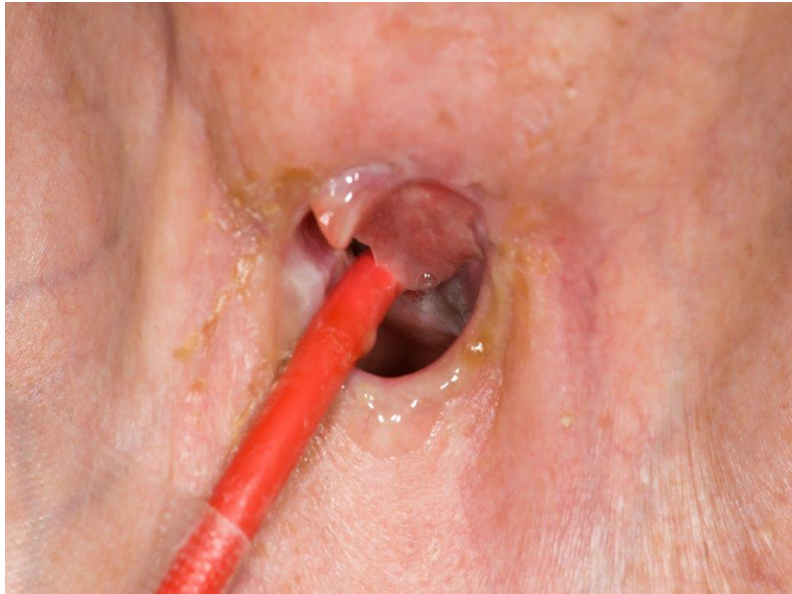
- A. prosthesis age, candida, prosthesis too long
- B. Stoma size, food debris, poor humidification
- C. Prosthesis age, food debris, candida



Voice prosthesis



Tracheoesophageal puncture: tissue health



Early referral/advice - optimal outcomes

- Change in swallow
- Reduction in mouth opening
- Laryngectomy issues
- Change in communication ability



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