

Talking About ...Speech Therapy after VPI Surgery

Following surgery for velopharyngeal insufficiency, the child may continue to have hypernasality or nasal emission, despite normal articulation. This is because changing structure does not change function. The child may need to learn how to use the new structure through auditory feedback. Auditory stimulation and imitation is the “natural” way to learn speech sound production and VP function.

Work on the speech sounds in repetitive syllables with different vowels (i.e., pa, pa, pa, pa; pee, pee, pee, pee, etc.). Start with the consonants in Group 1. (See groups below.) Make sure the child is mostly successful in eliminating nasality (as hear through a tube) before moving to Group 2, and later to Group 3.

- Group 1: p, t, k
 - Group 2: b, d, g
 - Group 3: f, s, sh, ch, j
- Using a “listening tube” (or even a bending straw), have the child put one end of the tube in the entrance of a nostril and the other end near his ear. When nasality occurs, it is heard loudly through the tube. Ask the child to try to reduce or eliminate the sound coming through the tube as he produces oral sounds and then words.
 - Put the end of the listening tube in the front of the child’s mouth and the other end at the child’s ear. Have the child try to increase the oral pressure on oral sounds to hear it loudly through the tube.



**Listening Tube
Feedback for nasality**



**Listening Tube
Feedback for oral pressure**

Oral & Nasal Listener¹ (ONL)

The Oral & Nasal Listener¹ (ONL)[™] is more effective than a simple tube or straw because it allows both the speech-language pathologist (SLP) and the child to hear the sound at the same time and at the same volume. This makes it much easier to give appropriate feedback to the child. The ONL is also very effective for home practice because it allows the parent and the child to easily distinguish normal from abnormal productions.

- Put the end of the tube in the child's nose for feedback about nasality.
- Put the funnel of the ONL in front of the child's mouth to provide feedback about oral resonance, oral airflow, and oral pressure.



Oral & Nasal Listener
Feedback regarding nasality



Oral & Nasal Listener
Feedback regarding oral pressure and articulation

¹ The Oral & Nasal Listener (ONL) by Super Duper[®], Inc. www.superduperinc.com

For more information:

Kummer, A.W. (2014). *Cleft Palate and Craniofacial Anomalies: The Effects on Speech and Resonance*, 3rd Edition. Clifton Park: Cengage Learning.