

WebWhispers

Sharing Support Worldwide
Throat Cancer and Laryngectomy Rehabilitation



October 2013

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FEEDBACK



Food Choices

We, as laryngectomees, have swallowing problems in varying severity, from swallowing as we did before treatment to being on a liquid diet. Most of us have less saliva than we did before so we find foods with liquid content are easier to eat. We also may have problems with chewing foods small enough to swallow comfortably and chewing is what stimulates production of saliva and enzymes. You may have to help that along with tiny sips of liquid to help with moistening the foods.

We have to consider the standard food restrictions related to whatever other health problems we have, such as restrictions on sugar, fats, lactose, gluten, or allergies. And then, as we go through a few years, we realize radiation damage has not only taken part of your tasting ability, but also damaged the teeth. Of course, age alone can do that, and lack of proper care can exacerbate it. Unless you have a nutritionist working out a diet for you, you may be feeling that there is nothing left to eat after you find you can't chew and swallow as easily as you could. We need to adjust what we can about our abilities, such as getting dental work, if possible, and find substitutes for food items. We may have to even consider foods we didn't like. With a changed taste and needing a different texture, you might find different ways to serve an old favorite.

So when we talk about different kinds of foods, you have to subtract some or adjust others for you as an individual.

Dairy

Softer diets are pretty common and that often includes a multitude of dairy products.... not just milk. Dairy products are sold with low or no fat, with and without added sugars and they mix well with other foods.. Yogurt is not only healthy but easy to eat right off the shelf but can be the base for sauces, spreads and dressings. Ricotta cheese and cottage cheese can be eaten alone, flavored by you, added to cooked dishes or raw salads, and they blend if you need to drink your food. Hard cheeses of all kinds are great proteins but do contain more fat. Be careful of falling in love with the taste of ice cream and the way it just slides down your throat!

Vegetables

Lots of vegetables should be in your diet and raw is a good way to eat them but you have to chew and chew and teeth have to be sturdy, so many of us cook the vegetables until they are soft. Cauliflower mashes like potatoes. Steam broccoli. Sweet potatoes are great baked with nothing but butter! Almost all vegetables can be cooked soft enough to blend, with the addition of juices or broths, into a great drink or a wonderful soup. V-8 juices are also good to add veggies to your diet. Frozen vegetables with broth and left over meat, add some broth or V-8 and it is a fast, easy soup.

Fruits

Fresh fruits are wonderful. Read labels on fruit juices for exactly what is in them. Fruits have fructose as natural sugars but if they have added sugar, I look for another brand. Applesauce is easy to swallow and adds a good side dish and moisture to a pork roast dinner. Mashed bananas are great with smooth peanut butter. Stewed peaches, plums, apples, pears, all are easy to eat and delicious. Cinnamon and other spices add a nice taste

prunes, apples, pears, all are easy to eat and delicious. Cinnamon and other spices add a nice taste.

Grains

Cereals, snacks and baked items, pasta and rice seem to affect people differently. Try little bites and see. You are pretty safe eating any of these covered with milk or almond milk is very tasty!

Proteins

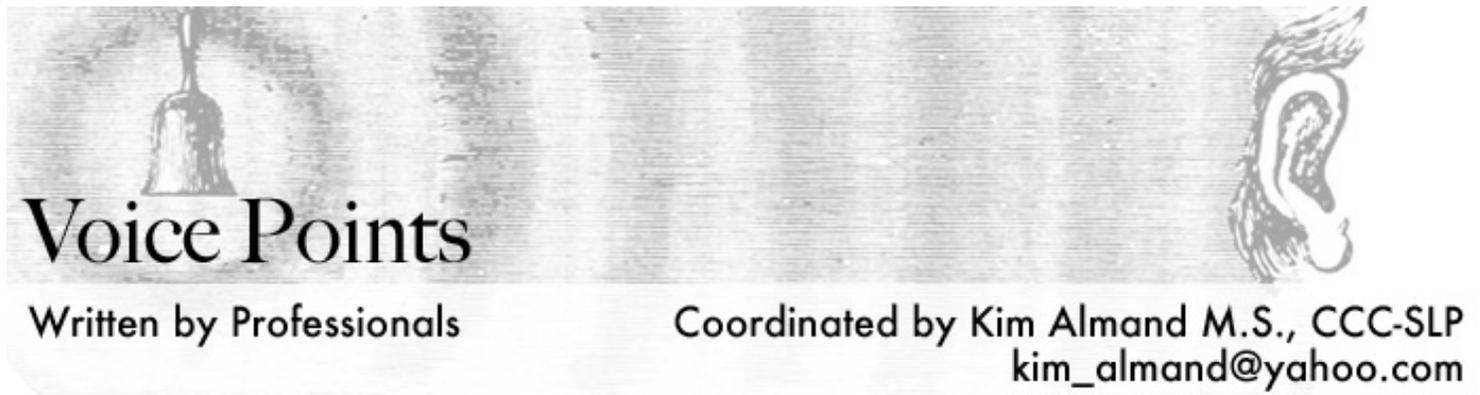
Meats? One of our main sources. If you can eat anything, no problem, but meats are hard to chew and all of us can benefit from cutting bites smaller than what would be a norm. Larys are prone to swallow a large bite of steak, like they used to eat and, if they can't get it back up, end up at the hospital so they can remove it. At least it doesn't cut off our trachea since we no longer breathe that way! Beef and pork can be ground or put in a food processor with sauce or plain, after cooking but can still require a lot of chewing. Chicken can be cooked in sauces, soups, casseroles, baked, broiled, fried and gets quite tender. Easier to eat. Fish, broiled just melts. Canned tuna, chicken, etc is all easy to eat in the way of soft foods. Cheese, as was mentioned earlier, makes a total dish with macaroni! Eggs, either whole or egg whites make wonderful omelets, with cheese and left over cooked veggies, it is a wonderful lunch and goes down easy.

Hope you can love foods again and be able to eat comfortably.

Enjoy,

Pat W Sanders

WebWhispers President



Voice Points

Written by Professionals

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Maximizing Swallowing After Total Laryngectomy

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Swallowing problems (dysphagia) after total laryngectomy may be temporary or long term. Risks of dysphagia include malnutrition, limitations in social situations and reduced quality of life.

The laryngectomy procedure involves complete surgical separation of the respiratory and gastrointestinal tracts. For

this reason, the laryngectomized individual does not risk aspiration of swallowed material. Instead, dysphagia following total laryngectomy is mostly characterized by problems with propulsion of material through the “new” post-surgical swallow passage referred to as the neopharynx.

Videofluoroscopic evaluation of swallowing conducted by an experienced speech pathologist is a critical component of post-laryngectomy rehabilitation. Not only does this dynamic radiographic procedure provide objective evidence regarding swallow function in this unique patient population, it affords the speech pathologist an opportunity to introduce compensatory strategies and consider specific interventions while the patient is being evaluated. Some strategies are considered indirect interventions (not actual “exercises”), while other interventions consist of direct exercises “customized” to a patient’s specific swallowing disorder.

Strategies and Exercises to Maximize Bolus Propulsion

note: these types of interventions are evaluated for usefulness by the SLP during the swallow x-ray

- Tongue base retraction exercises
- Head rotation
- Effortful swallow

General Strategies to Maximize Swallowing Efficiency

- Sit fully upright while eating/drinking
- Remain upright for at least 30-45 minutes after mealtime
- Alternate food and liquid consistencies to help “wash” foods through the neopharynx
- Alternate food and liquid consistencies to help clear residue from neopharynx
- Swallow multiple times for each bite of food

Diet Modifications

- Avoid tough/hard solids
- Avoid “sticky” foods
- Moisten dry/crumblly foods with sauces, gravies

For patients undergoing radiation treatment after total laryngectomy, a potential problem is lack of saliva (xerostomia) which can greatly impact oral manipulation and propulsion of food. Diminished sense of smell is very common after total laryngectomy since transnasal airflow has been removed as a result of the surgery. Diminished sense of taste may also arise as a result of chemotherapy, radiation or surgical resection. All of these factors can impact appetite and result in reduced food intake and poor nutritional status during a time when optimal nutrition is critical.

For Patients With Xerostomia

- Maximize hydration with decaffeinated liquids
- Consider using artificial saliva and oral lubricants (confer with otolaryngologist for recommendations)

Decreased Sense of Smell & Taste

- Add spices to food
- Use condiments with food
- Experiment with a wide variety of familiar and unfamiliar foods to determine likes/dislikes

Dysphagia Requiring Medical or Surgical Intervention

Scar tissue can create a stricture or significant narrowing in the swallow passage after total laryngectomy. The problem might be temporarily relieved with stretching procedures (dilatation). This is only done under the care of a physician. A surgical procedure might eventually be necessary to release the stricture. Some patients may have a fold of tissue (pseudoepiglottis) at the base of the tongue related to the surgical closure at the time of total laryngectomy. The pseudoepiglottis may form a pouch that collects food or liquid, resulting in effortful swallowing when the patient attempts to clear the material. If the pouch is large enough, a surgical procedure might eventually be needed to fix the problem.

Conclusion

It is essential for speech pathologists to discuss potential for dysphagia during the pre-operative counseling session ahead of total laryngectomy. Speech pathologists must also advocate for the videofluoroscopic evaluation of swallowing during the post-operative rehabilitation period. Dietitians should be viewed as valuable members of the

post-operative team, not just immediately after surgery but over the long term. Patients are strongly encouraged to pay close attention to their swallowing so they can alert health care professionals to any new or persistent problems related to ingestion of food and liquid (including weight loss) so that appropriate evaluation and treatment interventions can be initiated as soon as possible.



Yum, that smells good!

I bet you've all said that many times. I know I have. Whether it was coming home to a dinner just out of the oven or that quintessential smell of summer wafting from a grill in someone's back yard to the unmistakable aromas of fresh baked bread and pastries emanating from a bakery as you strolled past it, smell is one of our most powerful senses. Indeed researchers tell us that smell is the most evocative; both for good and bad, and the olfactory nerves actually have a direct line to the brain forging life-long connections so that even in your dotage the merest whiff of something can transport you back in time with astonishing clarity.

This month we have addressed the issue of eating for larys and most of the commentary revolved around challenges in swallowing as a result of surgery and changes in taste, often due to radiation. However, there can be another significant issue which was not as frequently mentioned and that is our diminished sense of smell because we no longer breathe through our noses.

Interestingly this was brought to my attention by the newest member of my family who is not a lary, not even a human, but rather a small and pitiful looking black cat I fell in love with at the local animal shelter. She seemed fine, albeit scrawny and scraggly due to poor care in her previous home. She'd been cleaned up, doctored, dosed, spayed and given a clean bill of health. So Little Miss Deanna came home with me and my assistant adopter/grand-daughter one Saturday last month. Even though she high-tailed it under the bed that first night she gobbled up every bit of food I placed under there and even allowed me to reach under to rub and pet her as she purred loudly and leaned into my arm. I thought she is going to be great. The next day I even coaxed her out from under the bed and onto my lap for an enthusiastic session of ear scratching and purring.

There had been one caveat from the Humane Society. I was sent home with a sheet of paper talking about URI (upper respiratory infection). It is a rhinovirus that is highly contagious to cats (not humans and other animals) and very common among shelter cats. It is similar to a head cold in humans with many of the same symptoms and like a

head cold is not usually too serious and resolves itself in a week or two as long as the cat doesn't have underlying issues. So when little kitty started sneezing and sounding a little snuffly I wasn't too worried. Then she stopped

issues. So when little kitty started sneezing and coughing a little sniffly I wasn't too worried. Then she stopped eating. I took her to the vet the next day because I wanted my vet to check her out anyway and I was concerned about not eating since she was so thin to begin with. The vet gave me a nutritional supplement and suggested a variety of food for her to try to whet her appetite. Then she made an interesting statement. Cats won't eat if they can't smell.

And then I did a little research. Cats have amazing noses. Humans, in spite of all those memories evoked by our sense of smell, have only about 5 million odor receptors in our nostrils compared to 200 million in cats. Plus they have a unique organ in the roof of their mouth which allows them to "taste" the air to smell it. There is even a term for the unique way they do this, called the flehman reaction AND it is not unlike the way some of us use mouth air drawn up to our nasal passages to enhance our sense of smell! We even look alike when we do it.

On the other hand, cats have very diminished taste buds compared to us: 473 to 9,000. It is easy to see why in the wild cats would have come to rely so heavily on their sense of smell to protect them from eating some harmful. And equally easy to understand why a cat who can't smell her food won't eat it. Now, as my vet reminded me, when I fretted about her not eating, think how miserable you feel with a head cold and how food is just so unappealing. Well now, doc, actually it's been quite some time since I had a head cold for reasons all of you readers understand. However, I do remember and that brings me back to our "food issue".

I suspect that a major reason our food doesn't taste the same is that we can't smell it the same. It follows that if you don't breathe through nose you don't smell much that way either. Yes, we do get whiffs and we can enhance our techniques but we are simply not going to have that same level of sensitivity to smell that we once enjoyed. And that can have a huge impact on the way food tastes for some of us. And one last little fact I found when I Googled this subject.

Although our sense of smell is our most primal, it is also very complex. To identify the smell of a rose, the brain analyzes over 300 odor molecules. The average person can discriminate between 4,000 to 10,000 different odor molecules. Much is unknown about exactly how we detect and discriminate between various odors. But researchers have discovered that an odor can only be detected in liquid form. We breathe in airborne molecules that travel to and combine with receptors in nasal cells. The cilia, hairlike receptors that extend from cells inside the nose, are covered with a thin, clear mucus that dissolves odor molecules not already in vapor form. When the mucus becomes too thick, it can no longer dissolve the molecules. [Newton's Apple]

And that also relates to something I learned when I was trying to entice my little patient to eat up. Warm the food up with some liquid and that has seemed to work with her. So, if your food doesn't taste the way you remember, try 'smelling' it better. I know it looks funny but, hey, if it works for cats with their meager taste buds, it might work for you, too!



Foods for thought!

What foods do you enjoy the most after your surgery?

Sally North, TX - 1990

I had my Laryngectomy in December of 1990 and after 24 years, I think that I am almost back to my original "normal". For about six weeks after my operation, I had a feeding tube but after that I could eat and drink anything. I had to cut up my meat into little pieces in order to swallow it and I still do.

I can smell just about anything as long as I can be around it for a few minutes though the object does have to have a strong odor. Also, I can taste almost everything but the things that taste best to me are foods that have a strong taste or are acid, like olives, pickles, or lemon juice. I guess that I am lucky that I can smell, eat, and drink without too much trouble. I have been very fortunate in that respect.

Debbie Livingston

I am on an all liquid diet and live on Carnation Instant Breakfast. I drink four shakes a day or will do two doubles if I'm going to be out. I mostly like the chocolate and add a huge scoop of peanut butter to each shake. Sometimes I add banana. I also add banana to the strawberry flavor or add cinnamon to the vanilla. My daughter started using the vanilla Breakfast as creamer to her coffee to get more vitamins! I can't taste a lot and I also eat ice cream but have to let it melt a little first. Sometimes I get a small bowl of milk and drop chips ahoy cookies in the milk let them melt then spoon up! It's not pretty but it sure tastes good. I did find that I can eat guacamole dip with one of those large pretzels as a spoon because they totally melt down slowly. Better than the peg tube!

Max Hoyt, Delaware - 1993

My food intake is quite modified from those days when I found that staying low carb eased my yeast problems.

After the '4 bypass' surgery, I was told to change my food intake. I am still on a low carb diet but have modified it somewhat. I don't add any sugar or salt to prepared food. I read labels very carefully to keep the sugar and salt to a minimum. I have added fiber and strive to get at least 25-30 Gms a day. Red meat is limited to low fat steak and 95% fat free ground beef. Fish is decidedly the mainstay although it is getting rough to have a variety with fish. I will not eat any fish that is not raised in the USA.

The biggest problem with food and consumption is my teeth. While I don't feel I am on a soft diet by any means, I

tend to enjoy soft foods a lot. I have two favorites right now. I dearly love Navy Bean soup made the old fashioned way with a real ham hock. The second is vegetable beef barley made with low sodium V8 juice. This vegetable soup gives me the opportunity to clean out the left over frozen veggies in the freezer.

The result of this effort has been many less yeast problems with the prosthesis. I am now changing the prosthesis about every 4 months in lieu of every 4-5 weeks. After the last surgery, I was on a regular diet and the yeast problem was back in full force. Once I went back to low sugar, low carb, the yeast was much less although still waiting in the wings, so to speak.

PS We are celebrating this month with a back yard picnic. Family and neighbors/friends are invited. Sure wish you lived close enough to be here with us. The occasion is 20 years cancer survivor and 60 years of living with the same spouse/caregiver. How's that for the records?

Flossie Hopkins, Caregiver - 2010

My husband, Rich, had surgery 9/25/10 and has not eaten since. He is on j tube feed. He sometimes swishes a pop and spits because he cannot swallow. Taste comes and goes but he is just happy to be here. He is a complete lary with a stent but a lesion from radiation prevents any eating. He also got lymphoma and had chemo, then was left with neuropathy. He is getting healthier everyday with ups and downs but has a great outlook. No junk food, only Jevity by pump. GOD has a plan for him. It is 3 years this month and he is thankful to be here, independent and embraces each day.

Tim Hembree, Wichhita, KS - 2008

I hope these help our meat eaters who are finding meat difficult to eat.

Swiss Steak. Grilling or broiling steaks 1/2 to 3/4 inch thick. Cut into small pieces approximately 3 inch square. Coat with flour on both sides and sear both sides in a skillet. Remove meat from skillet and add one cup water and mix with the leftovers in skillet. Layer the skillet with one to two layers of meat. Cover with 1/2 to 1 diced onion, thinly sliced carrots and celery. Then top off with sliced stewed tomatoes. Bake in oven at 350 degrees for 3 hours. I use a 10 inch skillet and two small cans of tomatoes(12-16 oz I believe). The steak comes out very tender and moist and the gravy helps it slide down easy.

BBQ pork ribs. Use country style pork ribs, the kind with small bones on each end that are mostly meat. Boil the ribs in a pot of water for an hour. Remove and trim off excess fat. Transfer to crock pot and cover with favorite bbq sauce and simmer for 6-8 hours. The ribs come out falling apart and very easy to swallow. My special secret is to add yellow mustard to the bbq sauce. Not enough that you taste mustard but enough that you taste a slight twang.

Len A.Hynds. Ashford, Kent ,England, The Speechless Poet - 2004.

Meat is my biggest problem. The texture takes so much chewing, and if it is difficult to break down into tiny swallowing portions. I try to break down and squeeze every bit of goodness out of each mouthful, swallowing the liquid goodness, and sometimes being forced to place the residue on the edge of the plate. Quite embarrassing in front of guests, so on those occasions I have fish, which, I suppose, has become my favourite dish. The one I like best is Skate, and that gleaming white flesh from a freshly caught fish tastes delicious. I also eat a fair amount of Haddock, Salmon and Trout.

With liquid drinks my taste has definitely changed. I now rarely drink lagers or soft fizzy drinks, as I find my delicate throat is easily irritated. For an ex CID Officer from Scotland Yard to go to a bar to buy a round of drinks, and either have for myself, a pure orange drink or a glass of milk, causes eyebrows to be raised.

I think the most important thing I have taught myself to do since my throat was completely altered is to give a double swallow at every mouthful of food or drink. I have a hollow, or a 'sump', I call it, from where the tumour was removed, and this does get filled with food and drink before being completely swallowed. It normally covers the top of the valve stopping you speaking, so a double swallow always helps things along, coupled with a drink of water. Try a double swallow, and you will clear the 'sump' so much quicker.

Brenda Jackson

Since my surgery my favorite food is Banana Smoothie(s) by McCormick. I drink a banana smoothie at least 7 nites a week. I love them, (ice creme) was causing me to gain too much weight. I also like pastami, fried chicken and rice.

Jim Fohey, Oscoda MI - 1994

My taste has changed a considerable amount. When I had my Laryngectomy I owned a restaurant and was the head cook, so there were many problems. We made many sauces to order and you have to taste them to be sure you have the right blend of ingredients to produce the correct taste. Once I was back in the kitchen, I had to ask others to taste some sauces to make sure they tasted as they should as everything did not taste as I remembered.

A couple of years later, did I have a NEW taste or was it what it should be tasting like. I don't know. I liked chocolate and for a long time could not eat it as it tasted really bad, so not so many chocolate desserts were made, for a while, now I enjoy it but not anywhere as I did before. The one food that came back was hamburger, as a kid we ate a lot of it as it was what we could afford and I liked it. Still do and it tasted as I remembered, so I had one thing that tasted correct to me.

Slowly my taste came back for most things. To this day, 19 years later, there are still a number of things that taste different. So I am not sure if we ever truly get back our previous taste or do we just have a NEW taste?? I do not know. Being retired now, I cook for myself so I eat many things we did at the restaurant and enjoy them as we did everything from THE HAMBURGER to lobster and fettuccini alfredo dishes so I eat well and it tastes good. Is it the old taste or new, I don't know, when I do have guests they all love everything so who knows. Maybe it is just a free meal??

Jim Maloney, PA (via NJ)

Luckily and foresightedly-- I was prehooked with a Tummy Tube before treatment -- Couldn't 'do' solids seemingly forever.. slow by slow , month by month, able to take bigger bits. Swallowing sans smell is a whole new ballgame. Barely catch hints of strongest odors...

Blessed by my Dee, patiently aside... Vacation Cruise Dining.. sat at table for two.. sometimes 10 or 15 minutes 'til what seemed okay piece went Downnnnnn ! It gets better... maybe not 'quite" back to old norm. But doable enough. Must add.. Radiation took toll.. so all store teeth and looking great!

Tips ~~ To bring up to normal amounts, add OTC Nutient drinks, BOOST, ENSURE or Rx Generics, cheaper. Hot Cocoa versions are good. Mindful of chewables... Big Dessert-er!

I am 5'10" and lary took me from 230 to a fairly steady 175. Be of good heart! Counting Blessings.

Peggy Welch - 2013

I had a complete laryngectomy on February 20, 2013. At first nothing tasted good and swallowing was very difficult. Everything seems to get bigger and bigger as I chewed and it was hard to swallow. Then, it felt like it got stuck half way down my throat-- now things are somewhat better. I can taste some things and prefer foods which consist of more liquid than solid (soup, dumplings, stews.) For some reason, meat does not taste the same--actually tastes rather nasty now! Probably just me--still enjoy vegetables. I make myself eat at least one good meal a day--one that is nutritious and filling.

Rush Stuart, Arley, AL - 2012

My taste buds still working so everything tastes the same. Being from the South, I love well seasoned vegetables especially greens. As for meats, I lean toward seafood which is better for you, the only exception being barbeque pork. Big fan of any Cajun cuisine and I fix a great black eye pea jambalaya.

I have noted that red wines taste a little different but, what the heck, I was weaned on bourbon and branch water.

Fortunately, I do not have any problem with swallowing as long as I chew my food well. I use to devour my food so slowing down is good for me.

Carl Strand, Mystic, CT - 1993

I was initially reluctant to discuss this month's topic because I am one of the few laryngectomees with no eating problems. I had the typical dry mouth problems after radiation (which was nearly two years before surgery.) They had moderated by the time of my laryngectomy and several years later had nearly disappeared.

One of my support group members taught me how to pump my tongue to move air through my nose which restored my sense of smell. This being a good deal of our sense of taste, gave me a near normal ability to taste my food.

When I attended my first IAL Voice Institute and Annual Meeting I was shocked to find I was the only laryngectomee at my table at the banquet that could eat the menu without difficulty.

I eat nearly anything. I don't like a lot of heat, so there are some regional foods I avoid. I like seafood, and being a New Englander, lobster and crab are favorites as well as most fish. I do need to be careful with steak and roasts to chew sufficiently. As most laryngectomees, I do have a narrowing of the esophagus where it was rejoined to the pharynx and tongue. On a few occasions when I forgot that fact, I have had to excuse myself and find a bathroom to dislodge a piece of poorly chewed meat. Because I have a voice prosthesis, I can occlude and push the blockage up.

I'm twenty plus years out - widowed and live alone in Mystic, Connecticut. My children are nearby.

As I said at the beginning, I'm almost ashamed to be writing this considering that I know how many folks have significant problems with eating.

John Iwanyshyn, Mountainside, N.J - 2008

Hi Webbies

I'm 92 years old and had my operation March 5, 2008 at Mt Siani Hospital in NYC. I've been doing well.

My favorite food is Meatloaf(turkey) with mashed potatoes and a vegetable (any kind). I have been blessed that I have been able to eat any type of food and swallow my pills.

Love to all Webs,
John

Steve Staton, CA - 2007

Ummmmm, food my second favorite subject. I am a big eater. I have been able to eat nearly everything for the last few years. The foods I do have problems with are ground beef, ground turkey, and lunch meats. There is always one piece the becomes lodged in my throat against my voice prosthesis. Sometimes it comes out in a day, other times it comes out in 2, or 3 days. Hot beverages seem to dislodge it the best

I smoke meats. Tri-tips, porkshoulders, briskets, beef, and pork ribs. Also topping my list of favorite foods are baked beans, potato salad, cole slaw with pineapple chunks , all made from scratch.

It took a couple of years after my surgery to be able to eat like this, due to the same reasons that you have had to deal with after your operation.

I live in California, so we barbecue year around. Last week we had Monsoons come thru, with a bit of rain, and plenty of thunder, and lightning (very, very frightening), but I still had the smoker going.

All this talk about food has made me hungry. Good day for a barbcue!

Thank you for your submissions. Edits are used for length, clarity and to keep comments on subject of the month.
Staff of Speaking Out



Best of Intentions

By VICKI LORIO

No, this is not about what we should do or fail to do but what we wish to do. And no, it is not motivational or particularly inspiring. It is just a quirk that I want to share, with the hope that others can identify with it.

I am Irish. Food has all kind of significance for us since my fraternal grandparents were first generation Irish, raising seven children in a one bedroom home.

My father was the best cook in the world. He could open the fridge and take out left over and create a snack or a min meal without ever giving it a thought. Of course he could never duplicate it because the ingredients kept changing. He would put that thick index finger on the side of the bowl, go once around it, lick his finger, and pronounce it ready or would return to add a bit of this or a bit of that. Served with saltines and a flourish, and we were happy, happy. And dad would say, "Hope the poor people are doing as well as we are." His best of intentions were to provide us with food, traditional and non-traditional.

However because we were a family with 5 kids we were part of that poor people group but we didn't know it. We never went without any essentials, played a lot, and thought everyone had more than one kid in a bedroom. The only reason we finally got a TV was because my father wanted to watch the McCarthy hearings and swear at the TV as only an Irishman with a beer in his hand can. That TV was the highlight of my pre-teen years and a reason for pontification by my father during every news cast. The level of his voice would tend to rise with the amount of beer he had. However he was always right and those ^%*##% never knew what they were talking about, damn it!

Dad was a traveling salesman, home only 2-3 days a week. But what a great few days those were! Every Sunday was dinner at my grandmother's. Usually a roast that dad had talked the butcher at the Piggly Wiggly to giving him. Dad would point out that the meat in the display case was a little dark. Dad would regale the poor man with the dangers of selling that "black" meat. But Dad, out of the goodness of his heart would take it, saving the butcher from embarrassment and liability.

Then Dad would laugh all the way home because he knew the change in color indicated it was aged and more tender. That darn thing would cook for hours on my grandmother's stove. And hours and hours. He would test it, taste the juices, add a little of this and a little of that. He would direct us to peel potatoes and carrots and clean celery and cut up onions while he went into my poor grandmother's fridge to create as he would say, "horses ovaries", being funny rather than saying canapés or hors d'oeuvres which would send us into peals of laughter and upset my very proper mother. Plus my grandmother would lose her left overs for which she probably had plans to use later in the week. But he knew the more we filled up on his snacks, the less hungry we would be for the expensive main meal.

Because of his love of food and sense of adventure, as kids we had artichokes, unheard of in Iowa! We had chicken livers wrapped in bacon before that was fashionable. We had smoked carp out of the Waterloo River before it was a delicacy. We had turkey fixed on the grill before the turkey industry even thought of marketing it to be fixed that way. We had chicken wings cooked with his special sauce that cooked for hours until the meat fell off the bone. We made ice cream out of snow in the winter.

Life moved on. We grew up and Dad contracted laryngeal cancer, resulting in him becoming a lary. His sense of smell was gone, he taste was significantly altered, his depression kept him out of the kitchen for about a year. Finally with family urging, he tried cooking again but it was never the same. There were times that the seasonings were overpowering and we could not eat what he prepared. Although we pretended, he knew. However he never stopped giving opinions on recipes and food preparation. Even though he could not clearly speak, his meaning was clear. The swear words came through loud and clear! Since we had grown up with them, no translation needed. IF you had the courage to cook for him, best you be prepared for a critique that would make most food critics blush. Yet he loved every minute of it because he was back in the middle of things, giving orders.

So what does "best of intentions" mean? It means I cut out every recipe I think Dad would like or would improve upon. I have a huge file on my PC of all kinds of recipes. Many of them remind me of Dad. Many of them are

perceived as "new" when this talented man who never had a chance to do what he wanted, cook, literally invented out of what was "poor peoples food", nutritious and innovative food for 5 brats and a multitude of friends.

My best of intentions are to fix at least one of these a week, something that does not happen frequently enough.

My best of intentions includes accepting that like Dad, few things taste the same to me. So I have to be careful when cooking that I don't forget that.

My best of intentions includes compiling a quasi cookbook for my grown children with the recipes they remember their grandfather fixing for them. I will not be able to accurately duplicate them but I can write about the memories. Perhaps they will be more successful than I in duplicating his cooking. And perhaps I can keep his memory alive.

My best of intentions includes using every opportunity given to me to prepare pre-op larys of what will happen to their taste and smell and to enlist the assistance of their family to understand the impact of these changes.. At this point I need to share a personal experience. My care pre and post op was wonderful. My SLPs were outstanding. But when I returned home and started to prepare hamburger, I tasted it and it was horrible! Afraid of contamination, I threw it out. Another package and the same thing! I tried kabobs, tasted like rotten meat. All the time my husband just accepted my actions but did say that it tasted ok to him.

After a few weeks of eating only yogurt and grilled vegetables, I had a tremendous craving for a Big Mac (no endorsement intended). Of course my husband got TWO of them because my weight gain was not what it should have been (oh, to have that problem again!!!). And I devoured the Big Macs and the French fries! I was ok! Not back to anything similar to pre-op but not into throwing good meat away.

I resolve when I think of the pain and challenges my father and others his age (WWII and post WWII) suffered because of this type of cancer and the adjustments they had to make which were far more significant than ours because we have the advantage of medical advances and social awareness, my tears will be of love, a sense of affiliation, respect, and awe.

My best of intentions are to keep their memories alive in a different way, recognize the importance of food because of its ethnic and economic roots, its emotional significance, its tradition, and their struggle to function with the loss of several senses, speech, taste, and smell. The things most of us take for granted until they are gone.

And the best of my intentions is to acknowledge how many of us cannot eat at all and to pray for them and their caretakers.

Vicki

Vicki Eorio is the author of other articles in HeadLines but this one, "Laryngectomy Father/Laryngectomy Daughter", has a special meaning and you might like to go back to read it from HeadLines, April 2002.

http://webwhispers.org/Headlines/Headlines_apr02.asp



Always Clapping

Non-Verbal Communication

My husband and I first took a trip to Las Vegas in 2003 and have been going at least once a year ever since. We enjoy everything about it, from shows, to restaurants, to people watching, and of course...gambling. We make a game out of doing these things in the cheapest possible way. For example, \$3 craps, \$5 Black Jack, the barbeque at Ellis Island for under \$10 which includes a beer, or the 2 for 1 pizza and beer for under \$5. We also go to "tickets4tonight" for good deals on shows, which have various booth locations in Vegas.

Our kids have always said "must be nice!" So, we promised them that once the youngest turned 21 and everyone was legal, we would take them with us. Our son turned 21 in June and we took our 3 night trip in August this year.

My husband and I have travelled twice to Vegas now since my laryngectomy. It certainly is different. I no longer sing Karaoke at the piano bar in Harrah's or squeal when I win at the "let it ride" table on the odd occasion that that happens. I love the card tables now because it's all hand motions anyway, and I love to walk "the strip" as I seem to notice more things now. My other senses have definitely become more acute.

So, to get on with my story, one evening while in Vegas with the kids, we were taking a walk down the strip. I love music so when I heard a good song I started to clap to the beat. I heard from behind me my daughter say "there she goes again" and my son reply, "Yep, clapping, Always clapping!" I turned around to let them know I heard them and they just killed themselves laughing. My daughter said, "Well, I never know if you're just trying to get my attention or what." And then the two of them started their laughing fit again. Haha!

Apparently now I clap about everything! I clap to get someone's attention, to applaud, in place of singing, when I'm mad, to call the dog, when I want someone to know whatever they said is funny or that I understand. The list goes on. I relate these many meanings of my clapping with a baby's cry. Babies cry when they are hungry, tired, wet, mad, sad, etc. So, I told the kids they will eventually learn how to distinguish between my various claps and what they mean.

I guess it's true, I'm clapping.

Always Clapping,
Maggie Scott
2012



When writing was my only method of communication, as a new laryngectomee, I spent several months before a valve was fitted, so to find a way of writing more quickly and trying to resume a natural life, I went to college, and then on to university at the age of 74.

At the end of each college or university course we normally had a celebratory dinner, one of which was held at a high class restaurant, I chose Sea Bass which I had never tasted before, and as I looked at it on the plate, quite frankly it could have been any fish. I thought in my usual mischievous way that it was probably a simple herring, suitably disguised, to earn them more money. Even though I immediately put such slanderous thoughts out of my mind, I just had to write a nonsense poem about a simple herring which overcame all the odds.

A SIMPLE HERRING

*I'm just a simple herring, trying to stay alive.
Those night-time eyes are staring, as deeper down I dive.
Carelessly I lost my shoal, trying to catch a sprat,
but I couldn't eat it whole, that sprat was just too fat.*

*Now alone in the ocean deep, I'm hiding in the sand,
and dimly see the creatures creep, with clutching claw and hand.
Suddenly beside me here, a monstrous shark sinks down,
yawning as his pilots near, prepare his settling down.*

*Then all at once they spot me, nudging him for a snack.
His massive eyes so beadily, could give a heart attack.
The pilot fish they agitate, quite angry with the shark,
wanting him to seal my fate, my future's looking stark.*

*But he thinks I'm one of them, as I'm licking at his skin.
Smiling he says, "Oh what a gem, now try and do my fin."
The pilots shrug their shoulders, and give up in disgust.
I'm getting even bolder, and enjoy each fishy crust.*

This herring who thought all was lost but survived reminded me of all my laryngectomee friends, who bravely adopt a new life, in spite of all the odds. When I graduated at the age of 77, in Canterbury Cathedral and approached the Chancellor in his green and gold hat and gown, he spotted my medical bib, and asked if I had a sore throat. Now able to speak, I explained about laryngectomees and the whole cathedral erupted into clapping. I hadn't noticed the microphone above his head. The clapping was not just for me, but for everyone of you who survived cancer, learned to speak, and live life normally again.

Bits, Bytes and No Butts!





Oh! That's why they posted that sign

What does the sign read? No coffee or soft drinks in the PC Lab!

Last month's issue we talked about the heat that can harm your electronics. This month another dreaded enemy...liquids!! Many do not realize that the PC or laptop they are using is actually a very sophisticated engineering marvel of electricity at its finest. Because it is electrical it must be protected from liquids, especially where they were never intended to be.

As the Lab sign says "keep liquids out" and away from costly accidents. Have you ever spilled that \$4 cup of Starbucks into your keyboard? You're right by the way the coffee is much cheaper than your keyboard. With a bit of fast thinking you may just be able to save Mr. Keyboard to key again.

Without spilling more coffee disconnect Mr. Keyboard from any part of the PC, while all the time doing this holding the keyboard upside down. Once you are outside or over the bathtub gently shake Mr. Keyboard until you no longer see and drips falling. Now take a can of compressed air or a hair dryer and with the keyboard upside down give it a few good blasts of air. Leave Mr. Keyboard to rest in a quiet, dry and warm spot) for the night. Mr. Keyboard's fate was in your hands and now the great moment of truth! Does it work?

Mr. Phone Goes to the Beach!

Yup, a cellphone is sure as heck electrical just like his neighbor Mr. Keyboard. Mr. Phone is a little better protected from liquids but not by much. Ever drop your cell phone into a toilet? Yes, it's gross, but it is also real life. Just in case you should ever submerge your phone or your Mr. iPad for that matter, there are some quick fixes to get them back in working order (hopefully).

As quick as you can, without causing another accident, turn off the power to the phone (even if you think it is off)...then remove the phone's battery, unless of course you have an iPhone since you'll be looking for it for a week. With the phone in hand and the battery in the other use a plain paper towel or soft absorbent cloth to dab off any moisture on the surface. The next "secret" trick is actually from the ancient Chinese cook, Who Cook Duck. In the 19th Dynasty he discovered the after his phone fell in egg drop soup it was so hot he flipped it from his hand and into the barrel of rice. Well since it was too hot to handle he left it there till the next day. Sure enough Who Cook Duck came to work and took his phone from the rice to throw it away when a co-cook Yum Dum Doo grabbed the phone to use it for an urgent order of hot dogs. To Who's amazement the phone worked and has been ever since...our lesson is once Mr. Phone gets wet get it into some rice (not cooked) and let it rest at least overnight...it may take longer. Chances are very good your phone or iPad will good as new.

Jump in the Stream and enjoy!

Next month's issue will cover the term you may have heard - "streaming" and exactly what that means and how your life can be made easier and fuller because of streaming. If you have any interest in controlling what you see on your family's TV's then this is a subject you really really want to know more about (for cheap even). If you have specific question drop me a note and I'll be glad to tackle it...that way we all learn.

Hot Tip

Do you find yourself wanting to have a cup of coffee with a favorite friend? Be sure to check into the Webwhispers Forum during the week and join the rest of us in sharing information in a "coffee in the morning" sort of way.

We have some wonderfully well rounded folks joining us every day. All sorts of "hot" news and tips that make our lives richer and just plain fun. You'll find everything from Lary issues, life lessons, Marlene's greatest tips ever, Mike's wonderful words of wisdom, Maureen's quick fix dinners and just plain fun. If you're not using this great little bit of high tech you are missing one of the best things in our Lary life. And be sure to watch for our next drawing for a brand new EL 1000 from InHealth Technologies. See you in the forum!

FORUM: <http://forums.delphiforums.com/webwhispers/start>

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