

Livewell Southwest

**Oral Suctioning of Adults in the Community
Standard Operating Procedure**

Version No 1.1
Review: June 2017

Notice to staff using a paper copy of this guidance

The policies and procedures page of LSW Intranet holds the most recent version of this document and staff must ensure that they are using the most recent guidance.

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	<p>Suctioning in the Community Policy documents Livewell Southwest:- Infection Control Policy 2013 Manual Handling Policy 2013 Consent to Treatment and Care Policy 2013 Record Keeping Policy 2013 Decontamination, Cleaning and Disinfection Guidelines and Procedures 2013 Hand Hygiene Procedure 2013 Single Use Policy 2013 Safe Management of Healthcare Waste Policy 2013 Management of Medical Devices Policy 2013 Mouth Care Assessment Tool 2013</p>
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1	Ratified	March 2014	Policy Ratification Group	Minor amends.
1.1	Extended	June 2016	Information Governance, Records, Policies & Data Protection Lead.	Formatted to LSW and Extended

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Oral Suctioning for Adults in the Community. Standard Operating Procedure.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Oral suctioning is an important aid in the clearance of secretions and the maintenance of a clear airway decreasing the risk of aspiration. This procedure has been developed to ensure safe practice when caring for patients who require oral suctioning due to an inability to clear the airway by cough or huff.
- 1.2 Oral suctioning removes excessive secretions and keeps the mouth and airways clear. Oral suctioning is performed using a Yankauer suction catheter and suctioning device. The large opening of the Yankauer sucker enables the clearance of copious amounts of secretions. It is angled to follow the contours of the oropharynx and buccal pouches of the mouth where secretions can collect. Yankauer suction must never be undertaken in the throat as this could result in vomiting and airway blockage.
- 1.3 Oral suctioning can be distressing for the patient and should only be used when other methods are ineffective. Alternative methods of clearance, such as mouth care, positioning and postural drainage should first be trialled before the consideration of oral suction. The need for oral suctioning will vary with each patient therefore the frequency of undertaking this procedure will be based on individual assessment by the multi-disciplinary team and recorded in the individual's management plan. Oral suctioning should be used to prevent distress and airway blockage as required.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 To provide a competency framework for staff teaching oral suctioning to carers.
- 2.2 To maintain a consistent approach to safe practice in oral suctioning.
- 2.3 To provide a clear pathway for provision of equipment.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 **Oral Suction – Oral suctioning is the mechanical aspiration of secretions from the oral cavity, no further than the back of the teeth/buccal space.**
 - a. **PPE** - Personal Protective Equipment.
 - b. **MDT** - multi-disciplinary team.
 - c. **Yankauer suction catheter** – A large bore catheter with large hole and angled to oropharynx, designed for clearing copious secretions.

- d. **Suction machine** – that supplied by community equipment supplier and designated to clear secretions.
- e. **Management Plan** – Documentation used to record interventions by LSW and care staff.

4. Duties & Responsibilities

- 4.1 The **Chief Executive** is ultimately responsible for the content of all policies, implementation and review and delegates the responsibility of day to day implementation of the policy to the Director Professional Practice, Quality & Safety and the individual clinicians conducting the care.
- 4.2 Responsibilities of **Director(s) Director of Operations, Medical Director, Director Professional Practice, Quality & Safety**. Are responsible for identifying, producing and implementing policies relevant to their area.
- 4.3 Responsibility of **line managers**. It is the responsibility of the Clinical Lead and service managers to ensure effectiveness of the policy within their area. To ensure staff comply with policy and procedure and ensure competency training is current and signed off.
- 4.4 Responsibility of all **staff** who are administering oral suction in the community, to ensure competencies are current and signed off. To gain informed consent from individual undergoing this clinical procedure. To ensure all carers administering oral suction are competent.
- 4.5 Responsibility of any other **group / individual**. Any carer administering oral suction should have been deemed competent and have completed the competency detailed in Appendix B

5. Oral Suctioning Procedure

5.1 Indications

Client's inability to clear secretions independently (sputum, saliva, vomit) from their upper airway by a cough, huff or other method of airway clearance. This may be due to obstruction, falling levels of consciousness or physical disability, and the presence of which is causing discomfort, distress or obstruction.

5.2 Precautions and Contraindications for Yankauer suctioning;

- a) Facial fractures
- b) Head and neck surgery
- c) Loose teeth or dentures
- d) Clotting or haematological disorders
- e) Sore mouth or damaged mucosa
- f) Severe bronchospasm

- g) Stridor
- h) Restless/anxious client
- i) Fitting patient
- j) Spasms or increased muscle tone of face and neck muscles

5.3 Dangers

Do not attempt to remove a solid object or inhaled foreign body from the back of the throat with suction. This could result in the object being forced further into the airway and possibly causing a complete obstruction.

5.4 Equipment required

- Suction machine obtained from community equipment supplier and set at appropriate pressure for patient. The machine should be checked as being currently PAT tested.
- Filters for above machine.
- Suction tubing.
- Yankauer suction catheter.
- Cooled boiled water.
- Container for cooled boiled water to clear secretions from suction tubing.
- Personal Protective equipment as appropriate.
 - Visor/glasses.
 - Gloves.
 - Apron.
 - Hand decontamination equipment.
 - Clinical waste facilities.

5.5 Procedure

1. Explain the procedure to the patient in accordance with Consent to Examination/Treatment Policy.
 - a. To obtain patients consent and co-operation.
 - b. To agree on communication method(s).
2. Check that the suction equipment is free from defect and that it is clean. The chamber should not be filled and the machine switches on and off.
3. Turn the machine on and check suction pressure by kinking suction tubing and regulate vacuum pressure to maximum pressure indicated in individual's management plan (between 200mmHg and 250mmHg).
 - a. High negative pressures can cause mucosal trauma increasing risk of infection.
4. Decontaminate hands in accordance with LSW Hand Hygiene Policy.

- a. To reduce risk of transfer of organisms on healthcare worker's hands.
5. Apply Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as appropriate.
 - a. To protect clothing and prevent transfer of transient organisms.
6. Position patient in an appropriate, adequate and comfortable position with head turned towards you. Change and dispose of gloves as per policy.
 - a. To gain optimal position and reduce risk of gastric contents aspiration.
7. Decontaminate hands in accordance with Policy and apply PPE.
8. Check patient's mouth to ascertain whether mouth care is first appropriate.
9. Attach Yankauer suction tube to the suction tubing and introduce Yankauer to the patient's mouth leaving the clean sleeve on until ready to use **WITHOUT APPLYING SUCTION**. Do **NOT** pass the Yankauer past the back of the teeth/buccal space.
 - a. To prevent tissue damage.
 - b. To prevent stimulation of the gag reflex and vomiting.
10. During oral suction, aim to view the cavity at all times to ensure that soft tissue does not come into contact with the Yankauer.
 - a. To prevent damage to the mucosa of the oral cavity.
11. Apply suction on withdrawing working from the back of the mouth forwards.
 - a. To ensure that all areas of the oral cavity are cleared.
12. Apply mouth care as appropriate.
13. Note the colour, tenacity and quantity of the secretions. If they look infected and this is an initial observation, then arrange to send a sample through the care co-ordinator.
 - a. Changes need to be monitored and potential infection captured at an early stage.
14. Ensure mouth cavity is clear and patient is breathing comfortably.
 - a. To ensure procedure has been effective and patient has no distress from secretions or procedure.
15. If secretions collected around/under mouth plates/gum protectors these

should be removed, cleaned and replaced. Apply mouth care as appropriate.

a. To ensure patient comfort.

16. Rinse Yankauer and suction tubing thoroughly with cool boiled water by using suction in order to remove secretions from tubing and cover with the plastic sleeve to protect Yankauer.

17. Remove PPE and dispose of waste in accordance with Infection Control Policy. Decontaminate hands in accordance with Policy.

a. To comply with Health and Safety regulations.

b. To minimise risk of cross contamination.

18. Record all care performed in patient's Individual Management Plan and in any supplementary healthcare records.

a. In accordance with Record Keeping Policy.

19. Check level of secretions in suction bottle liner and check filters and change/dispose of as deemed necessary and in accordance with Infection Control Policy and manufacturer's instructions.

a. To maintain correct working of the machine.

20. Change tubing and Yankauer sucker as required by manufacturer and dispose of in accordance with Decontamination, Cleaning and Disinfection Policy.

a. To reduce risk of infection in line with policy.

21. Reorder stock as necessary through care coordinator on EPROC.

6. Training Implications

6.1 Healthcare workers will need to undertake the appropriate training to demonstrate the knowledge and practical skill in oral suctioning. All staff attempting oral suction must complete the competency assessment detailed in **Appendix A**. Competency training is available through LSW Training and Development Department.

6.2 Training will be initially provided in a train the trainer scenario with annual updates to clinical staff.

6.3 The health professional, who having undertaken the cited competency training, can then provide the initial practical training to those carers who might have need to administer oral suction during the care intervention.

- 6.4 These can be then signed off by the health professional deeming the carer competent.
- 6.5 A carer competency sign off sheet should be completed and kept within the care plan for the particular patient. **Appendix B.**
- 6.6 Competency training in oral suction is also available to non LSW staff through LSW Training and Development Team.

6.7 Competency

- Knowledge of basic mouth and throat anatomy.
- Indications for mouth care.
- Knowledge of indications for suction.
- Knowledge and understanding of suction device.
- Knowledge of contraindications for performing suction.
- Knowledge of importance of preparing patient physically and psychologically.
- Knowledge of importance of assessing and reassessing patient's needs.
- Knowledge of importance of reviewing patient and when a reassessment is required.
- Knowledge of side effects of suctioning and any action to be taken.
- Knowledge of relevant policies.
- Knowledge of potential sources of infections and actions to minimise risks.
- Knowledge of ordering equipment and consumables.
- Knowledge of troubleshooting difficulties with equipment and process.

6.8 Performance

The individual staff member must be;

- Able to assess patient's need for oral suction.
- Able to prepare patient for the procedure both physically and psychologically.
- Able to gain consent.
- Able to establish way of communicating if the patient is unable to speak.
- Able to assemble, prepare and check equipment.
- Able to carry out procedure according to guidance.
- Able to carry out general mouth care.
- Able to respond to any adverse reaction/complications and report to the appropriate individual.
- Able to dispose of equipment and waste material in accordance with policy.
- Able to complete the relevant documentation.
- Currently deemed as competent in line with policy.
- Able to trouble shoot.
- Able to contact Millbrook if problems with equipment arise.

6.9 Provision of equipment

Suctioning machine will be ordered through community equipment provider. In patient's own home, consumables such as infection control disposables, PPE, tubing and Yankauer tubes will be supplied by the care coordinator. This may be the Long term Conditions (LTC) Matron, Allied Health Professional (AHP) or the District Nursing teams.

7. Monitoring Compliance and Effectiveness

- 7.1 Staff competency compliance reviewed and audited annually. Competence completion to be part of the essential skills for the healthcare professional's post.
- 7.2 Notes audit.
- 7.3 Policy review and adjustment in light of evidence changes.

All policies are required to be electronically signed by the Lead Director. Proof of the e-signature is stored in the policies database.

The Lead Director approves this document and any attached appendices. For operational policies this will be the Locality Manager.

Signed: Director of Professional Practice, Quality and Safety.

Date: 03 June 2014

Appendix A

Clinical/Professional Competency Assessment Form
Competency: Oral Suctioning in the Community

This form is to be used in the assessment of your current performance and to provide evidence of development.

Care Quality Commission Essential Standards of Quality and Safety reference(s)	Outcomes 9, 11, 14, 16, 21
Author	Sue Graham. Clinical Lead Physiotherapy
Date agreed	
Version number	AHP1

It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure they are working to current and relevant policies, standards and guidelines.

Staff Name:

Department:

This statement of competence will provide evidence towards the following dimensions in the Knowledge and Skills Framework:

C1 – level 3/4 Develop and maintain communication with people who have complex conditions and/or complex situations

C2 – level 4 Develop oneself and others in area of practice

C3 – level 3 Promote, monitor and maintain best practice in health, safety and security

C6 – level 3 Promote equality and diversity

HWB2 – level 3 Assess health and wellbeing needs and develop, monitor and review care plans to meet specific needs

HWB5 – level 4 Plan, deliver and evaluate care to address people's complex health and well being needs

HWB7 – level 4 Plan, deliver and evaluate interventions and/or treatments when there are complex issues and/or serious illness

Aim: For Registered Practitioners to demonstrate evidence of competence in:
**Oral Suctioning in the
 community**.....

Objectives/criteria	O	A	S	C	Su
Can explain the basic anatomy of the upper airway and buccal area					
Reviews the notes and understands the indications for oral cavity suctioning					
Can identify general reasons for oral suctioning					
Shows a clear understanding of contra indications and complications in oral suctioning					
Can explain all parts of the oral suctioning equipment and demonstrates correct set up procedure					
Gains consent and explains procedure					
Positions patient in comfortable and effective position					
Uses correct PPE and infection control technique					

Outcome: the individual will be able to perform this skill/activity safely and competently

Aim: For Registered Practitioners to demonstrate evidence of competence in:
 ...Oral Suctioning in the
 Community.....

Objectives/criteria	O	A	S	C	Su
Uses correct suction pressure					
Suctions the correct areas of the mouth cavity					
Understands the procedure for checking sputum colour, quantity and tenacity					
Cleans tubing and machine with correct procedure and carries out decontamination procedure in line with policy					
Demonstrates ability to troubleshoot common problems with machine and technique					
Can monitor and order consumables correctly					
Records intervention in line with policy and professional standards					
Demonstrates ability to know when to and change liner, filters, tubing and Yankauer and follows disposal procedure correctly					

Outcome: the individual will be able to perform this skill/activity safely and competently

Evidence used to support claim	
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Agreed action plan (if relevant)	
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Competency Statement (Assessor)

I confirm that the above named member of staff has achieved the required competency level.

Name:

Designation:

Signature:

Date:

Competency Statement (staff member)

Having received appropriate training I am competent in this procedure at this time. I have discussed this role as part of my job description with my manager.

Name:

Designation:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix B

CARE OF A PATIENT REQUIRING ORAL SUCTION (PATIENT SPECIFIC)

Goal: To be able to maintain a clear airway in a client using oral suction.

Objectives	Discussed		Observed		Assessed	
	1	2	1	2	1	2
State the signs that suction may be needed.						
Demonstrate preparation of the equipment necessary for suction.						
Demonstrate safe use of suction techniques to clear the oropharynx.						
State why it is important to note the outcome of suction.						
Demonstrate knowledge of the requirement to dispose of used equipment appropriately.						
Demonstrate knowledge of the correct maintenance procedures for suction equipment.						

Carer's Signature:Date:

Assessor's SignatureDate :

Designation:

Review date one year from the date of competency.

Underpinning Knowledge for Suction Competence.

1) State the signs that suction may be needed.

Suction is likely to be necessary when breathing sounds obstructed, coughing and spluttering is heard **and** sputum is clearly visible in the mouth and at the back of the tongue.

2) Demonstrate preparation of the equipment necessary for suction.

Ensure that the portable unit is charged. Ensure clean water is available for washing through. Have gloves and disposal bag ready. Attach the tubing to the machine at one end and attach yankauer to the other end. Keep the yankauer in the wrapping. This is a clean procedure but not sterile.

3) Demonstrate safe use of suction.

Put on gloves, remove yankauer from wrapping and switch machine on. Carefully put yankauer into the mouth.

Do not suction the insides of the cheeks or any skin, gums etc. in the mouth.

Do not push the yankauer back too far - you should be able to see the tip all of the time.

Remove the yankauer from the mouth and suck clean water through to clean until all the tubing is clear.

4) State why it is important to note the outcome of the suction.

The volume, colour and consistency of the sputum should be noted. This can be reported to the nursing staff / carers. Large volumes, thickness and any colour other than white is very significant.

5) Knowledge of disposal of equipment.

Once washed through, tubing can be wrapped and left in situ. The yankauer should be wrapped in the bag. Tubing and yankauer should be changed daily and disposed of in a yellow bag. The collection container should be washed as per the manufacturer instruction booklet.

6) Knowledge of correct maintenance procedures for suction equipment.

Equipment is serviced at least annually by the provider and should have a sticker to that effect. Any problems should be reported to the provider and the unit withdrawn from use. The unit should be charged regularly in accordance with the manufacturers recommendations.

All information regarding the machine can be found in the manufacturer's instruction booklet.

Appendix C

Using the suction machine:

- Have the suction machine near the patient. You should be able to reach comfortably.
- Check that the suction device chamber, sucker and tubing are clean and that the chamber is not full.

Switch the suction machine on, to make sure that it is working – especially if the machine has been left to charge in a different room.

- Check the suction is working by kinking the tube and watching the pressure on the suction display going up.
- Position the patient facing you.
- Suction gently inside the mouth by moving the sucker slowly across the back of the mouth from right to left. Do not go too deep or touch the throat as this can be uncomfortable, cause trauma to the inside of the mouth or make the patient sick.
- Take note of the contents of the yankauer and report any concerns.
- After use – rinse the sucker and tubing with clean tap water from a clean cup until clear.
- Switch suction off and empty the chamber, so that it is clean for the next person to use.
- Protect the Yankauer sucker with the sleeve provided.

Your suction machine should have a re-chargeable battery; it is recommended that it is always fully charged, so it can be used in the event of a power cut.