

WebWhispers Support Moderated Email Lists

The purpose of the WebWhispers Email lists is the sharing of knowledge and experience among laryngectomees, caregivers, friends, and medical personnel via email sent to all list members.

A typical message may have a caregiver writing to ask questions about the treatment scheduled for her newly diagnosed spouse or parent. Answers will usually come from those who had a similar situation.

Another may be someone feeling a little foolish to ask how you shower without getting water in the stoma. *Easy*, someone might answer, *wear a shower guard*. While another member writes, *Keep your back turned to the water and shelter your stoma when you turn to face the stream of water*.

Some messages are urgent when people are frightened and others write to soothe or suggest solutions. Some are funny with tales of families learning together how to handle everyday situations.

Our indignant responses were overwhelming when a new laryngectomee wrote to say his doctor had told him to get rid of his three loving and much loved dogs. From all over the world people wrote with pet stories. This brought our record for the briefest but clearest answer, *Keep dogs. Fire doctor*.

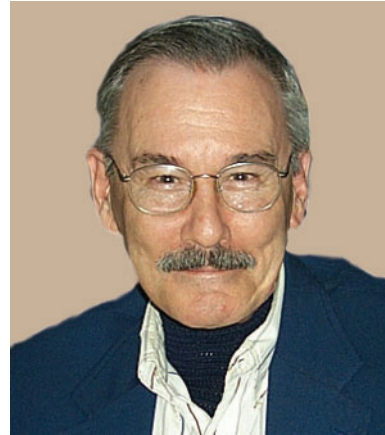
On our WWHealthHelp Email list, which is a list oriented toward medical questions, we have professionals who will often answer privately a question relating to health or speech.

For those who are not familiar with the way a list works, those who sign up for a listserv are able to write one email and it will go to everyone who has joined that list. The answers sent to the list will again go out to everyone on the list. Our list mail is moderated so only pertinent topics are allowed and we do insist on the discussions being civil so we can all learn from each other in a safe place.

WebWhispers Founder

Lt. Col. David L. Helms, USAF, (Ret.) is known as “Dutch” to the many grateful larynx cancer patients and survivors who meet on the site he started after his own laryngectomy in 1994.

Dutch had been a military jet pilot, negotiator, teacher, instructor, coach, narrator and emcee for a variety of events. He had held briefings, led discussions, and sang in choirs, choruses, and even barber-shop quartets. His entire life had been about talking and singing. He simply could not imagine going through life without his voice and thus losing it was devastating.



No one told Dutch about the existence of local laryngectomee support groups so he did not have that benefit. His computer provided some answers and in an effort to help himself in his own adjustment and to aid others, he invited other laryngectomees worldwide to join him on his newly created *Cancer of the Larynx* web site.

In just a few years this web site became the international online support group that has become known as *WebWhispers*. It now supplies the needed reliable information, assistance, support, and guidance to the initially diagnosed larynx cancer patient and provides social interaction with others who share the same lifestyle, have confronted the same problems, and are willing to work together for the benefit of all laryngectomees.

Dutch resides in El Lago, TX and is the permanent Webmaster and member of the Executive Committee of WebWhispers.



Free
Laryngectomee
Support
Via
The
Internet



www.webwhispers.org

What is cancer of the larynx?

What are the treatments?

What kind of surgery will I have?

Will radiation be necessary?

Will chemotherapy be necessary?

What is a laryngectomy?

Will I be able to speak again?

How long before I recover?

Will I be able to go on working?

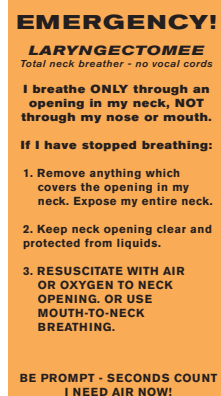
How will it change my life?

Those who are facing larynx cancer can find the answers to these and many other questions on the WebWhispers web site and through discussions held on email lists.

www.webwhispers.org

The WebWhispers web site is maintained to provide information about larynx cancer, treatments, surgery, recovery, and to explain what life is like after a laryngectomy. The site is used and recommended by professionals, patients, survivors and caregivers.

Our Information Library is a multi-section presentation of both general and specific answers for those



Pocket Emergency Card

who have been diagnosed with cancer of the larynx or who need a laryngectomy for other reasons. It includes special sections with explanations of terms and advice for before and after laryngectomy surgery. Symptoms, treatments, and side effects are covered. Links are provided to otolaryngology centers and other reliable sources for additional support. Addresses for ordering free catalogs or videotapes and links to many cancer information sites are listed.

We have choices for learning to talk again, written guidance from health care providers and ideas gathered from the experiences of laryngectomees. These people know what it is like to survive this type of cancer and wish to ease the way for others facing treatments, choices, and challenges.

Suggestions found here will aid in preparations for laryngectomy surgery and aftercare. The sections relating to **Talking Again**, include tips for obtaining and using an electrolarynx, an explanation of the TEP prosthesis as well as esophageal speech and alternative methods of communication. There are



Medical ID Bracelet



Electrolarynx



Indwelling Voice Prosthesis

other categories such as Stoma Care, Radiation, Treatment Side Effects, Travel, Activities and Everyday Living. Illustrations are provided to make them easier to understand.

Included are two newsletters, Whispers on the Web and HeadLines, specializing in articles and education for the laryngectomee, plus links to other



Fashion Stoma Cover

We also provide club listings from around the world and a comprehensive listing of dealers and manufacturers who specialize in supplies, products, and services for laryngectomees.



Hospital Emergency Decal

While our informational and educational web site is open to all, we do have services offered on a secure section of the site for members only and member confidentiality is maintained.



Stoma Covers

The WebWhispers Nu-Voice Club is an on-line affiliated club of the International Association of Laryngectomees. The membership is free. WebWhispers is a charitable organization, under IRS 501(c)(3) and, as such, is eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions. This brochure is available due to contributions made to the Bob Hodge Memorial Fund.