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# Prosthetic Speech Appliances



Y Ganolfan Cymraeg i  
**Wefus a Thafod Hollt**  
The Welsh Centre for  
**Cleft Lip & Palate**

Speech and Language Therapy

Morrison Hospital, Swansea, SA6 6NL

<https://sbuhb.nhs.wales/hospitals/a-z-hospital-services/cleft-team/>



### What is a Speech Appliance?

A speech appliance consists of a plate which fits into your mouth. It starts at the front of your mouth and extends over the roof of your mouth.

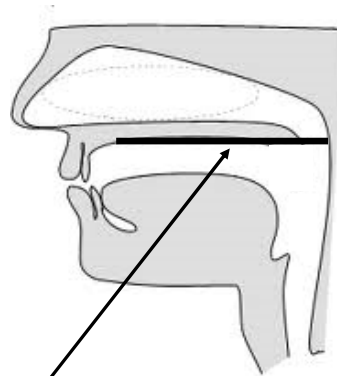
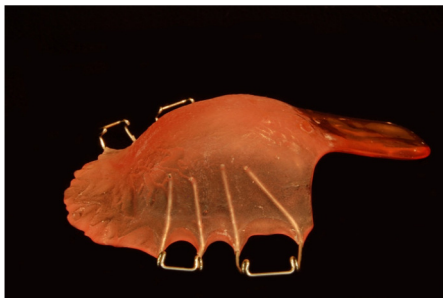
There are two types of prosthetic speech appliances:

- palatal lift
- speech bulb

Both can be effective in reducing airflow down the nose whilst talking. Following careful assessment the team will decide which appliance is the most appropriate for you.

### The palatal lift appliance

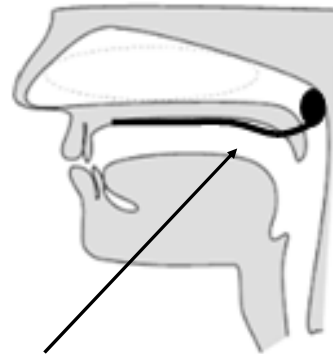
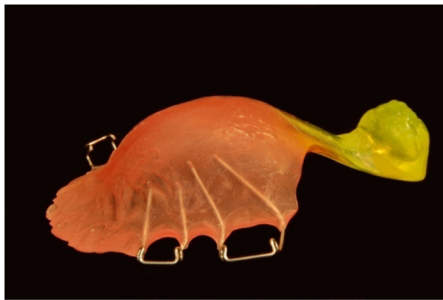
As pictured below, the acrylic plate extends backwards by holding the soft palate in an upright position.



Palatal lift in place

### **The Speech Bulb Appliance**

As pictured below, the acrylic plate extends behind the soft palate (soft part of the roof of the mouth) finishing in an acrylic ball.



Speech bulb in place

### **Do I wear the speech appliance to bed?**

No. You can put it in first thing in the morning and take it out before going to bed.

### **How could I benefit from a speech appliance?**

You have been assessed by a Speech and Language Therapist and this has indicated you have difficulties with air coming down your nose when you talk. Wearing an appliance can help to reduce this air and make your speech stronger, louder and clearer.

### **Is it uncomfortable to wear?**

Some patients feel initial discomfort, but if the speech appliance fits correctly you should not be able to feel it.

### **Can I eat and drink with it in place?**

Some patients can eat with the speech appliance in place; others find it a little difficult so prefer to take it out to eat. Most patients manage to drink with it in place.

### **Will it affect my breathing?**

No. A well-fitted appliance should not affect your breathing.

### **How long does it take to have a speech appliance made?**

First of all you will need to be fully assessed by the Consultant Restorative Dentist. Dental impressions are needed and a series of appointments will be booked. It usually takes a minimum of five appointments for the basic appliance to be constructed and a few extra appointments for the final modifications.

### **Where will these appointments take place?**

These appointments will be held in Restorative Dentistry, Morriston Hospital.

### **Do I need any further assessments?**

To help achieve an appliance that fits you well, you may require an x-ray (Videofluoroscopy of your palate) as well as a magic eye (Endoscopy), but this will be discussed with you if necessary. Throughout your treatment you may require additional speech assessments.

### **What is the speech appliance clinic?**

From time to time you may receive an appointment to attend the speech appliance clinic. This allows you to discuss your treatment with the Consultant Restorative Dentist and the Speech and Language Therapist. When your speech appliance is completed, you will be reviewed every year in the speech appliance clinic.

## Caring for your speech appliance

- Your speech appliance is only to be worn during the day. At night it may be washed in water and stored in a suitable container.
- When storing your speech appliance, place a few drops of water in the container. This will stop the appliance from drying out.
- Never leave your speech appliance out in the air as it will dry, crack and weaken. Always keep it moist, but do not leave it immersed in water.
- At any time throughout the day you can rinse your appliance under cold water and also use a toothbrush and toothpaste to clean and refresh it. Do not use denture cleaners such as Steradent.
- Some people can wear their appliance when they eat. If you can, rinse it under warm water after eating to remove any food debris and try to avoid sticky foods.
- Avoid scrubbing the metal clips as this may cause them to distort, which can affect the fit of the appliance.
- Some patients express that the appliance tastes strange after being in the container overnight. Running it under water and cleaning it with toothpaste will minimise this.



If you have any questions, queries, or require more information, please contact:

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Telephone: (01792) 703854

Monday to Friday (excluding Bank Holidays)

8.30 am to 4.30 pm

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