

PROVOX[®]

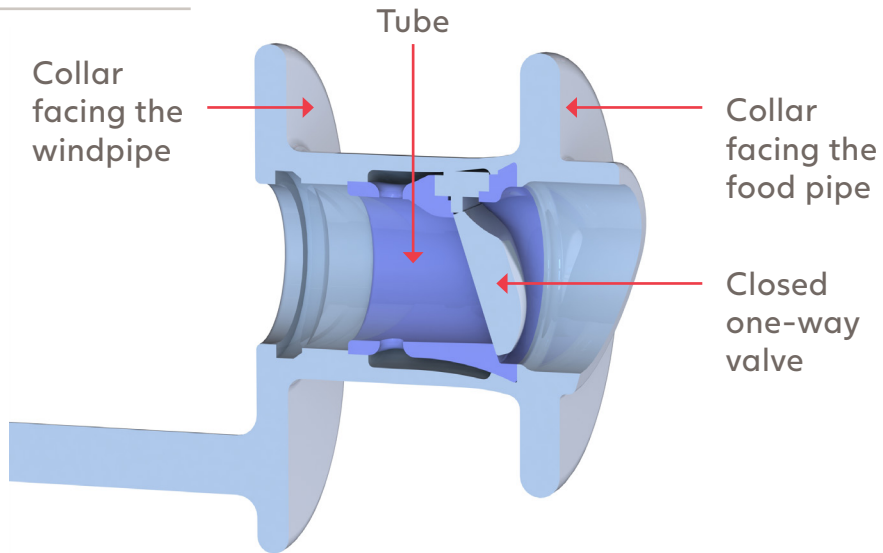
How to manage voice prosthesis leakage

Atos

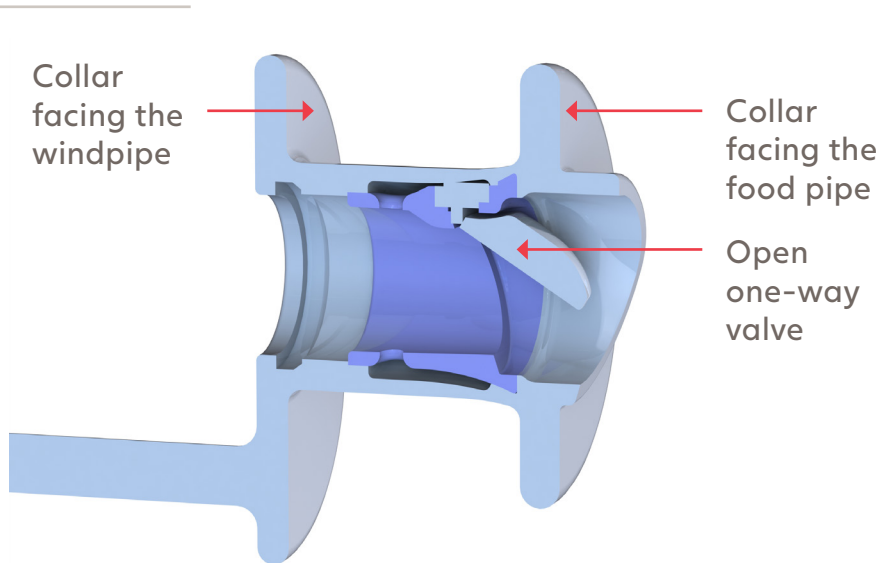
Breathing-Speaking-Living
atosmedical.com

Voice prosthesis with open and closed one-way valve

Closed valve



Open valve



Your voice prosthesis is manufactured with the utmost care and precision

Speaking with a voice prosthesis has proven to be a successful, more natural sounding and fluent way of speaking again after a total laryngectomy.

Your voice prosthesis is a small device made of medical grade silicone. The prosthesis is placed between the food pipe (esophagus) and windpipe (trachea) and has two 'collars' on either side to keep it in place. Between these collars there is a smaller tube that contains a one-way valve. This valve opens while speaking and is closed when eating or breathing to prevent anything from entering the windpipe that shouldn't – such as saliva, food or drink.

Provox voice prostheses are manufactured with high precision at the Atos Medical production plant in Sweden. Each voice prosthesis is thoroughly inspected by specially trained personnel before being approved and delivered to you.

Provox voice prosthesis



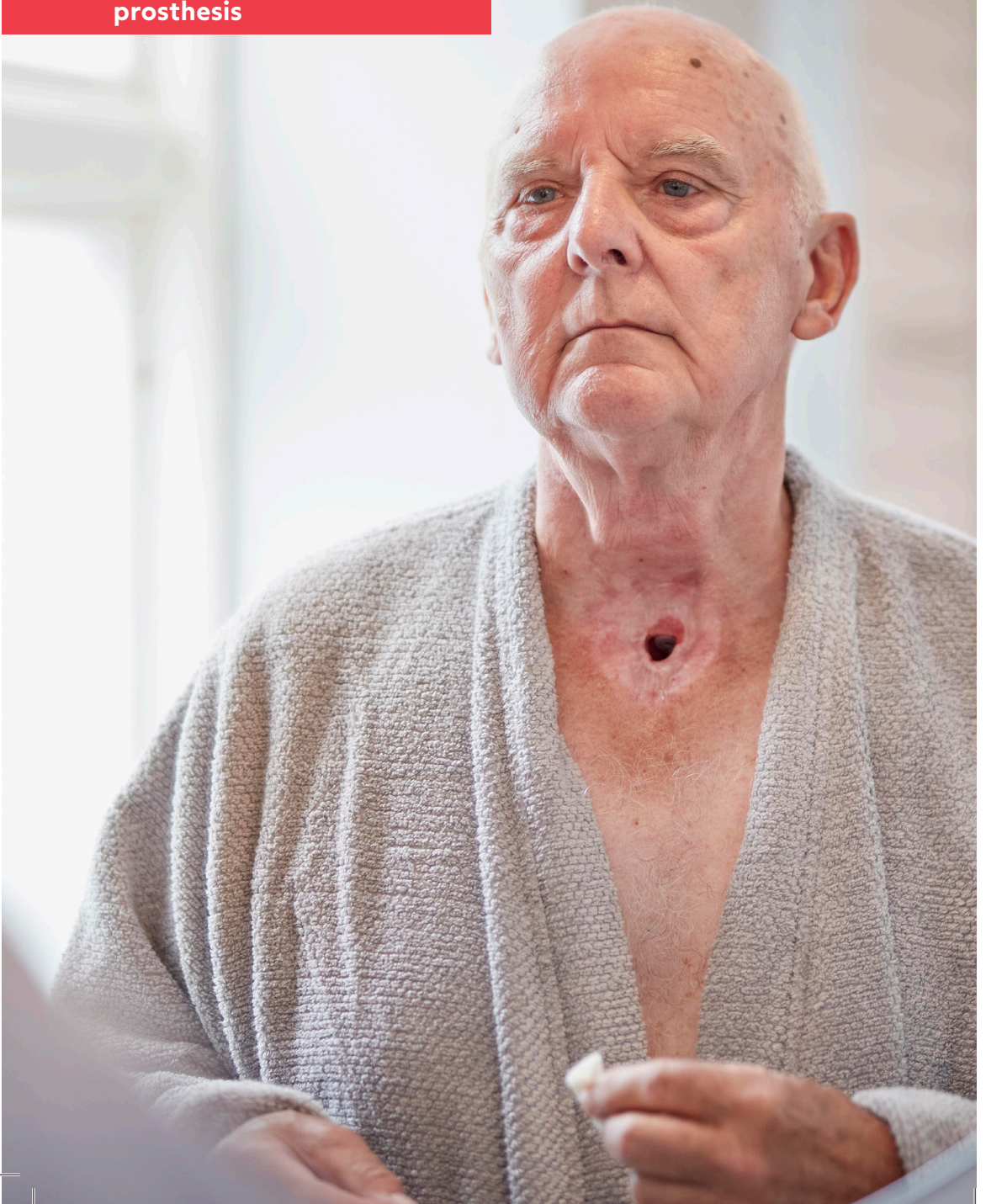
Why would your high quality voice prosthesis leak?

Your voice prosthesis is made of a silicone material that makes it possible for the prosthesis valve to open and close with precision when speaking, eating and drinking.

In time, all voice prostheses will start to leak due to a variety of reasons. The most common reason is fungus, yeast and bacteria (biofilm) from the mouth and throat accumulating on the voice prosthesis, preventing the valve from closing properly. Biofilm is naturally present in the mouths and throats of all people, and the accumulation will in time happen on all prostheses.

Leaking can also be caused by food that has been caught in the tube and is preventing the voice prosthesis valve from closing.

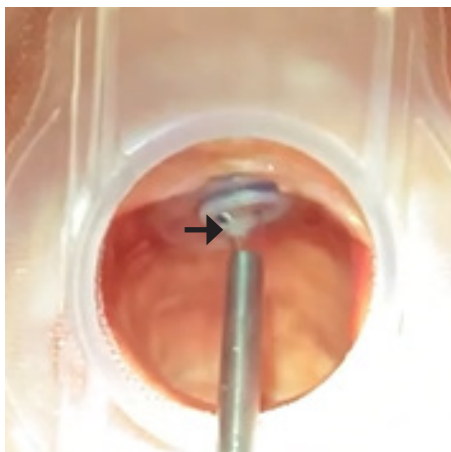
**Leakage occurs through
or around the voice
prosthesis**



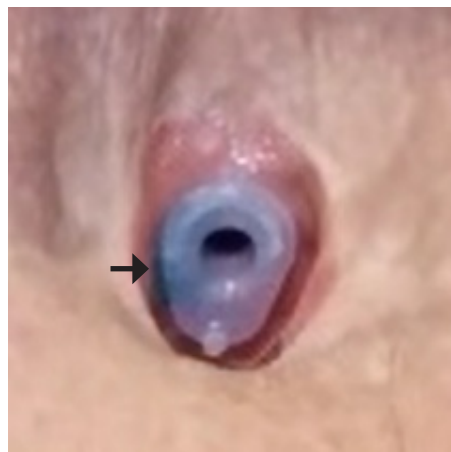
Leakage can occur through or around your voice prosthesis

Leakage of fluids or food into the windpipe is the most frequent problem related to the use of a voice prosthesis. The leakage can come through the small opening in the center of the voice prosthesis, or around the outside of the prosthesis, seeping between the 'collars' and the tissue. Leakage through and around the prosthesis are solved in different ways so it is important to determine how the prosthesis is leaking.

On very rare occasions, a voice prosthesis can dislodge or come out accidentally. Should this happen, it is very important that you contact your clinician immediately.



Leakage through the voice prosthesis



Leakage around the voice prosthesis

**Regularly check your voice
prosthesis for leakage**



What are the signs that your voice prosthesis is leaking?

It is recommended to regularly check your voice prosthesis for leakage, for example once a week on a set day so that it becomes a habit. Most of the time you will notice when it starts to leak, but that may not always be the case.

Typical signs of your voice prosthesis leaking include:

- Coughing during, or after, eating and drinking
- Fluid stained mucus
- Food stained mucus
- Increased mucus
- Recurrent chest infections

**An increase in mucus may
be a sign of leakage**



An increase in mucus may be a sign of leakage

Sometime leakage is 'silent' and you may not realize that the voice prosthesis is leaking. Typical signs of 'silent' leakage are increased mucus and coughing. If you are experiencing increased mucus it is a good idea to speak with your clinician. They can check if the voice prosthesis is leaking, since it sometimes can be hard to identify.

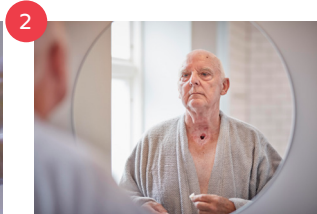
Leakage can cause chest infections

Leakage can, if not solved, cause chest infections. Inhaled fluids or food will enter the lungs and this can lead to breathing problems and infections and, in rare cases, pneumonia.

A step-by-step guide to identify leakage



Wash your hands carefully with warm, soapy water



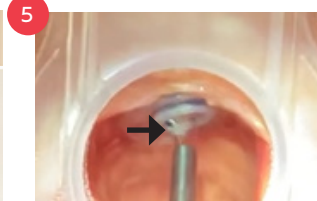
Position yourself in front of a well-lit mirror



Clean your Provox voice prosthesis with a Provox Brush and/or a Provox Flush



Take a sip of a colored liquid, e.g. milk or coffee



Look for liquid dripping through the center of the voice prosthesis



Look for liquid dripping around the edges of the voice prosthesis



You may need to take another sip to check again

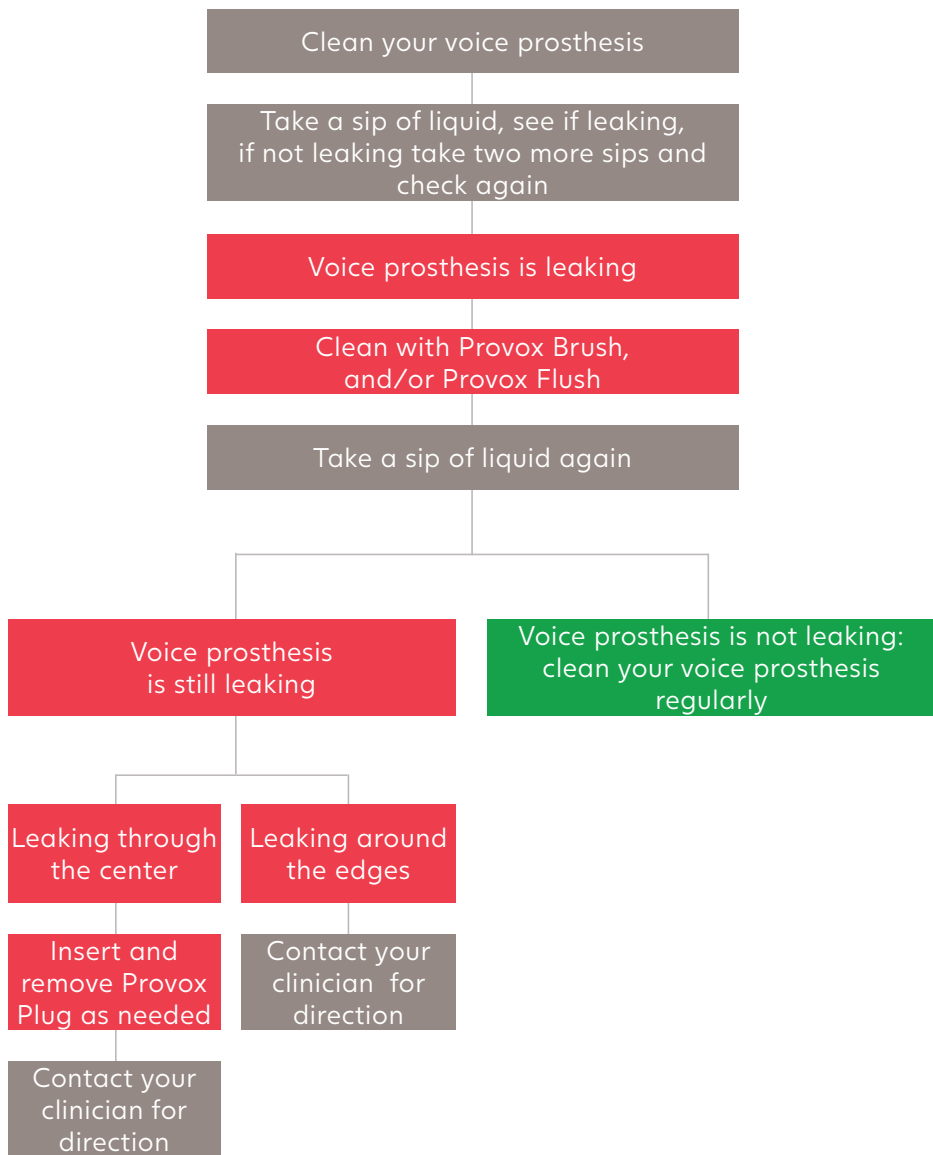


If you are not sure if it leaks through or around the voice prosthesis, insert the Plug into the voice prosthesis and take another sip

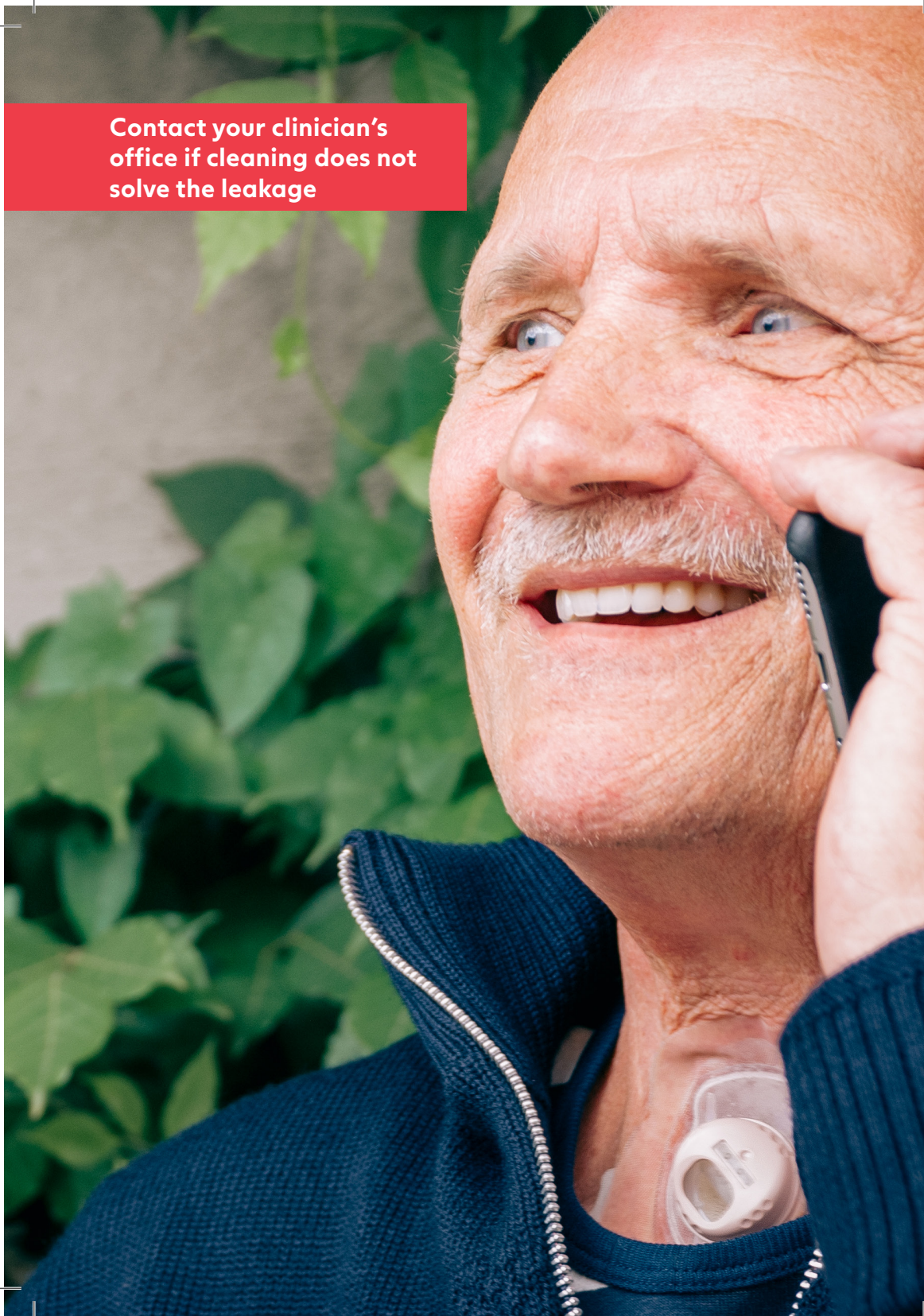
- If it still leaks, it is most likely leakage around the voice prosthesis
- If there is no leakage anymore, it is most likely leakage through

If it is difficult to detect leakage, ask someone in the household to also take a look.

Ask your clinician to teach you how to identifying leakage and advice you on when to contact them for assistance.



Contact your clinician's
office if cleaning does not
solve the leakage





What should you do if your voice prosthesis is leaking?

By **checking your prosthesis regularly** and being aware of the typical leakage signs, you can avoid any potential problems arising.

If you detect that the voice prosthesis is leaking, **clean it thoroughly with Provox Brush and Provox Flush**. Cleaning the prosthesis may, in some cases, solve the leakage problem.

If cleaning does not solve the leakage, **contact your clinician's office** and inform them that you are experiencing leakage. Schedule a visit the same day or as soon as possible to have your voice prosthesis replaced.

While you are waiting to see your clinician, **consider drinking thicker liquids** (i.e. smoothies or thick milkshakes) as thicker liquids may decrease or eliminate leakage. There are commercially available thickeners that you can add to liquids to make them thicker. Contact your clinician for advice on what thickeners may be available to you.

If you suspect it leaks through the voice prosthesis, **use the Plug** while eating and drinking until the voice prosthesis has been replaced.

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