

Caring for Your Tracheostomy Tube and Stoma Discharge Instructions

If you are having difficulty breathing, constant suctioning or tracheostomy tube is dislodged Call 911

Clean your tube and skin around it at least once a day, or as advised by your healthcare provider. For efficient care of your tracheostomy, follow these steps or any other guidelines you may be provided. Choose a clean, well-lighted space near a sink and mirror.

Step 1:

Gather supplies: drain sponge, cotton-tipped applicator, 0.9% saline solution or sterile water, 2 small plastic containers, clean gloves, Velcro trach tie, clean inner cannula, clean towel.



Step 2:

Place supplies on a clean towel. Wash hands with soap and water and put on clean gloves. Pour 0.9% saline or sterile water solution into a container.

Step 3:

- Remove the inner cannula by holding the neck plate with one hand, and gently pull out the inner cannula with your other hand. **If you're having trouble removing the cannula, contact your healthcare provider. Do not force the cannula out.**
- Insert a new inner cannula by placing two fingers on the neck plate and gently inserting the cannula into the trach tube.



Step 4:

Remove the drain sponge and check for skin issues. Clean the neck plate and skin using saline solution-soaked gauze pads or cotton-tipped applicators. Clean around the trach tube in a sweeping motion away from the trach.

Step 5:

Change the drain sponge daily or more often if soiled. Avoid leaving a wet sponge for long periods. Do not use a gauze pad. The frayed edges will increase risk for infection and a loose thread could potentially be inhaled into the trach.



Step 6:

Change the trach ties. Hold the trach tube securely and remove one side of the Velcro tie. Thread the new tie through and fasten it. Repeat for the other side. Ensure the tie is snug but not tight by placing two fingers between the neck and the tie.



Heat Moisture Exchanger (HME)

- Change HME every 24 hours and as needed for large mucus build up or patient report of resistance to breathing.
- Do NOT rinse the HME (either wipe clean or change as needed)
- If supplemental oxygen is administered, dry non-humidified oxygen only (with HME in place)
- Remove HME before coughing to prevent mucus build up and to prevent obstruction of airflow.
- Store unused HMEs in a sealed plastic bag at room temperature.



Tracheal suctioning

Suctioning is only done when indicated, not on a schedule. If possible, the patient should be encouraged to clear the airway by directed cough or other airway clearance techniques.

Step 1:

Gather supplies: portable suction machine, clean suction catheter, normal saline, one helper. Wash your hands with soap and water and dry them with a clean towel.

Step 2:

- Check the portable suction equipment for tight seals on tubing connections and the collection jar.
- Place the portable suction unit on a flat, dry, and safe surface. Plug it into an electrical outlet and turn it on.
- Set the suction pressure to not exceed 15 mm/Hg. Test the pressure by covering the open end of the suction line with one hand and observing the pressure dial.

Step 3:

Put on the clean gloves and connect the tubing to the new clean suction catheter by attaching the long connecting tubing from the suction machine to the catheter.



Step 4:

- Insert the catheter into the trach tube, being cautious not to touch anything before entering the opening. Ensure the inner cannula is in place before suctioning.
- Slowly move the catheter down into the trach until you feel resistance. Do not force it down.

Step 5:

Cover the suction port with your thumb, and slowly pull the suction catheter up and out. Do not leave it in the trach tube for more than 10 seconds.

Note: If you notice that the mucous is thick, you can use normal saline to make it thinner. This will help loosen up the mucous and make it easier to suction. Now you may insert the suction catheter and repeat Step 5.



Speaking valve

A speaking valve is a small device that helps tracheostomy patients speak naturally by redirecting airflow through their vocal cords, greatly improving communication and quality of life.

Care of Speaking valves (PMV)

- Swish PMV in pure, fragrance free soap and warm water.
- Rinse thoroughly with warm water.
- Allow the PMV to air dry before placing in storage container.

DO NOT use hot water, peroxide, bleach, vinegar, alcohol, brushes or Q-tips to clean the PMV.

Laryngectomy Tube

A laryngectomy tube is a medical device used after the removal of the larynx. It helps maintain an airway and enables breathing for laryngectomy patients.

Care of Laryngectomy tubes

- Clean laryngectomy tube as needed due to mucus build up in tube:
- Remove laryngectomy tube and rinse in warm to hot water to remove mucus.
- Clean tube with soft-bristled brush, if needed to clear mucus.

Clothing

Choose clothing that doesn't block the trach tube. Avoid crew necks, turtlenecks, and clothes that shed fibers or lint.

Leaving your home

If allowed and are able to leave your home. Bring a travel kit. In cold weather, wear an artificial nose or cover the trach tube loosely with a scarf or gauze to warm the air and prevent irritation. It also protects against dust and dirt on windy days.

Humidification

When using a trach tube, alternative methods are necessary to humidify the air we breathe. Drinking fluids and using a humidifier or "artificial nose" are vital for moistening and warming the air before it reaches the lungs.

Getting sick

During illness, suctioning may be needed more frequently. Stay hydrated, especially if experiencing fever, vomiting, or diarrhea. Cover the trach tube with an artificial nose or towel when vomiting to prevent airway blockage. If vomit enters the trach tube, suction immediately.

Bathing and showering

Take care during showers to protect your trach tube. Direct the shower spray at chest level, shield the tube, and avoid getting soap and water near it. Similarly, cover the tube when using products like powders or hair spray around your face and neck.

Tracheostomy Videos

Scan the QR Code to Watch These Helpful Videos:

- Patient Testimonial
- Introduction to Tracheostomy
- Tracheostomy Change
- Tracheostomy Site Care
- Managing Tracheostomy Emergencies

Its Easy:

1. Open your phone's camera.
2. Point it at the QR code.
3. Tap the link that pops up to access the videos.



<http://tiny.ucsf.edu/ACmeAx>

