



Information for You from Your Health Care Team

Taking Care of your Tracheostomy

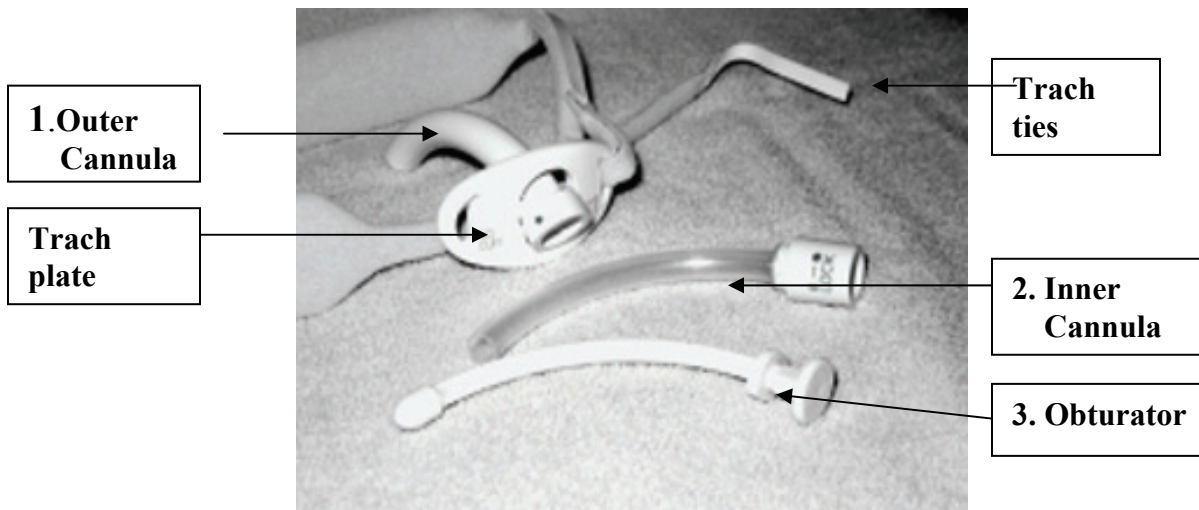
The tracheostomy tube or trach is placed in an opening in the windpipe. This opening is called a stoma. The stoma is a surgical opening made by the doctor to help you breath. This means you will not breath through your mouth and nose.

Your trach requires special care. Before you go home from the hospital we will teach you and your family how to care for your trach. This guide will help you learn to clean your trach and suction secretions.

We will encourage you and your family members to practice your trach care, cleaning, and suctioning as often as possible. The more you can practice, the more sure you will feel and the more capable you will be when you go home. You and your family will, on your own, care for your trach before you leave the hospital.

Ask questions, take notes, share your concerns.

Parts of a trach



- 1. Outer cannula** The trach plate is secured to your neck with trach ties which keeps the trach tube secure on your neck
- 2. Inner cannula:** Is removed for cleaning
- 3. Obturator:** The obturator is a plastic guide with a smooth rounded tip. You will use the obturator if the trach comes out by accident and needs to be put back in.



It is rare that the trach will come out by accident.

But, just in case, your doctor will show you how to put in a new tube before you are discharged from the hospital

Always know where your obturator is



Suctioning

Suctioning is needed very often when your trach is first placed to keep your windpipe clear. As you heal, the amount of secretions will become less and you will need to suction less often.

At home, you will need to have all of your supplies, equipment, and good lighting in a handy location ready to use should you need to suction quickly.

Supplies

- Mirror
- Suction machine and suction tubing (This will be arranged before you go home)
- Suction Catheter - Use a new catheter each time
- Paper cup
- Normal saline
- Box of tissues

Procedure

- Wash your hands
- Pour saline into paper cup
- Attach a suction catheter to suction tubing
- Dip the catheter into saline to lubricate
- Cover the catheter's thumb port, to check that suction is working.



Take a deep breath just before beginning

Avoid suctioning for more than 15 seconds or so at one time

- With your thumb OFF the suction port, gently put the catheter into your trach (about 4 inches). Never use force.

Suctioning will probably make you cough. Coughing helps to bring your secretions up.

- Place thumb ON suction port and slowly draw back
- Rinse suction catheter in saline and repeat suctioning as needed

IMPORTANT:

If unable to clear your tube and/or you become short of breath, call

911

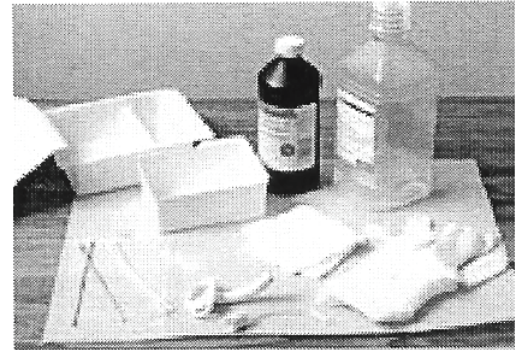
Cleaning The Inner Cannula

Cleaning helps to keep infection from growing and keeps your airway open. How often you will need to clean your inner cannula will depend on the amount of your secretions. Cleaning should happen at least in the morning and before bed.

Supplies

Have your supplies ready before you begin.

- ½ Strength Hydrogen Peroxide
(put into a paper cup equal parts Normal Saline and Hydrogen Peroxide or you may have “trach cleaning kits” available to you as pictured)
- Normal saline in another paper cup
- Suction equipment and supplies ready for suctioning
- Trach brush and Pipe cleaners
- Split 4X4 - sometimes called a trach bib
- Cotton Swabs such as Q-tips®
- 4X4 gauze, paper towels or tissues



Procedure

- Wash your hands
- Suction your trach
- Twist to unlock inner cannula and remove. Place inner cannula in the paper cup with ½ strength peroxide
- While inner cannula is soaking in peroxide, use saline soaked cotton swabs to clean the trach plate and skin underneath, rinse these areas with saline or plain water.





- Clean the inner cannula using your trach brush or pipe cleaners
- Rinse the inner cannula in the paper cup of saline
- Dry inner cannula, use the pipe cleaners
- Replace inner cannula, make sure to gently twist inner cannula to lock it in place. You

will feel a “click” which means the cannula is locked in place

Humidity helps to keep your secretions thin. A humidified trach collar, houseplants, a humidifier and a trach bib can help with this.

Call your doctor if:

- You have trouble getting your breath
- A change in your secretions—change in color, amount, or foul odor
- Redness or breakdown of the skin around the trach plate or stoma
- Fever more than 101F

Resources:

American Cancer Society
CNY area
1(800)227-2345

Helps family members cope with cancer or the death of a loved one

www.tracheostomy.com follow the links to the adult tracheostomy message board.

Speak Up if you have any questions or concerns