

HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR TRACH TUBE

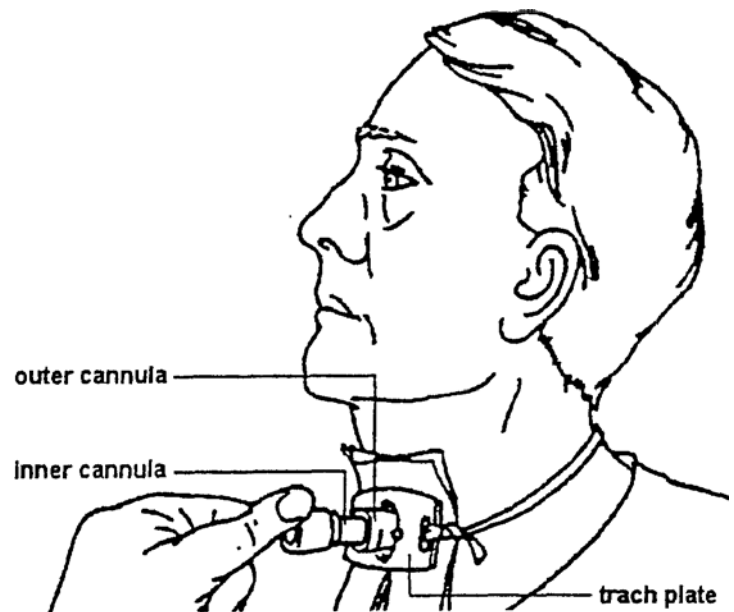
Dear Patient:

The doctor created a tracheotomy - a small opening, or stoma, in your throat.

Inserting a tube into the tracheotomy makes breathing easier because the tube keeps your windpipe open. A tracheotomy tube, "trach," for short (rhymes with cake), features three parts:

- an inner cannula;
- an outer cannula;
- an obturator.

The inner cannula fits inside the outer cannula, which you insert with the obturator.



HOW TO CLEAN THE INNER CANNULA

To prevent infection, remove and clean the inner cannula regularly as your doctor orders.

1. Gather the following equipment:

- a pair of scissors;
- two small basins.
- a small brush;
- a bottle of hydrogen peroxide; a bottle of normal saline;
- a clean soft wick dressing or pre-folded gauze dressing;
- clean trach ties or a Velcro trach collar.

Or you may use a disposable tracheotomy care kit which contains all the materials needed except the cleaning solutions.

A mild soap and water can be used instead of the saline and hydrogen peroxide to clean the trach if this is okay with your doctor.

2. **Now, wash your hands.** Position a mirror so that you can see your face and throat clearly.

3. Unlock the inner cannula and remove it by pulling steadily outward and downward.

- Prepare to clean the soiled cannula immediately for reinsertion (or put this soiled cannula aside and slip a clean inner cannula inside the outer cannula)

- If you start to cough, cover your stoma with your hand, bend forward, and relax until the coughing stops.

4. Clean the soiled cannula. Here's how:

- In the first basin, pour enough hydrogen peroxide to cover the inner cannula

- In the second basin, pour enough normal saline to cover the inner cannula

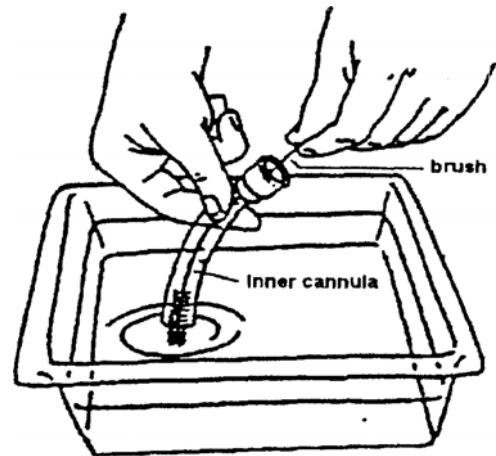
- Place the inner cannula in the first basin (with the hydrogen peroxide). You may see foaming as the solution reacts with the secretions coating the cannula.

- Clean the inner cannula with a small brush (you may obtain a special trach tube brush at a medical supply company or pharmacy). Make sure you only use the brush for your trach tube.

- Next, rinse the inner cannula in the second basin of normal saline. Make sure you rinse the inner cannula thoroughly otherwise the hydrogen peroxide could cause a burning sensation.

*** You may wash your trach with a mild soap and water and rinse well with clean warm water, if your doctor permits.

- Shake off the excess saline or water and reinsert the clean, moist cannula immediately. Do not dry it. The drops remaining help lubricate the cannula.



5. Reinsert The Inner Cannula. Lock it in place by turning it clockwise.
6. Replace the soiled trach ties that secure the trach plate:

NOTE: To prevent the trach plate from becoming dislodged, apply and secure, the new trach ties before removing the old trach ties.

- Knot the end of each clean trach tie to prevent fraying, then cut a 1/2 inch slit in each tie.
- Thread the end that isn't knotted through the opening on the trach plate.
- Feed the end through the slit as shown and gently pull the tie taught. Do the same for the other tie.



7. Secure The Ties at the side of your neck with a square knot. Leave enough room so you can breathe comfortably. You should be able to slip two fingers between the side of your neck and the knot.

Now use scissors to carefully clip and remove the old trach ties.



8. How to apply a Velcro collar: You may be given a Velcro trach collar, that can be used in place of the trach ties. The collar will come in two pieces. One is long and the other is short. Each piece has small, narrow Velcro straps on one end. The shorter piece has a wider Velcro strap on the other end..

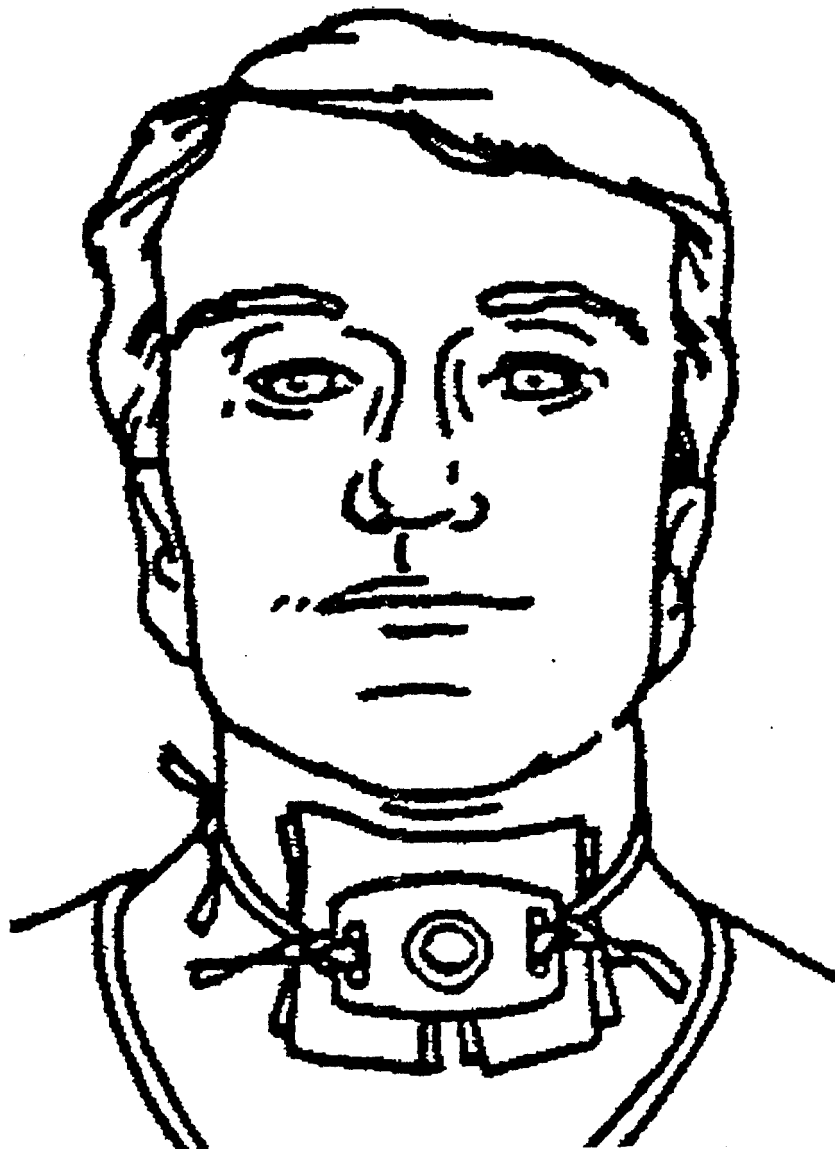
To apply the collar:

- Slip the small straps into the openings on each side of the trach plate so that the straps are on the outside.
- Secure the small straps onto the collar with the Velcro side;
- Adjust the collar around your neck so both pieces of the collar meet. It should fit securely but not tight;
- Fasten the collar in place with the wider Velcro strap that is on the short piece;

*** You may need to cut off some of the longer piece to get a proper fit.

9. Cleanse the skin around the trach tube with warm water. Using a 4X4 gauze pad, or clean wash cloth, gently wipe around the tube in a circular motion, starting around the tube and working outward. Be sure to dry the area well to avoid skin breakdown.

*** If your doctor permits, you may apply a thin layer of Bacitracin ointment around your stoma to prevent skin breakdown.



10. Finally, place a 4X4-inch soft wick dressing (or pre-folded gauze) behind the tube to protect your neck.

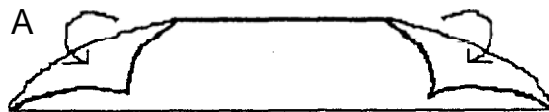
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HOW TO MAKE A PRE-FOLDED GAUZE

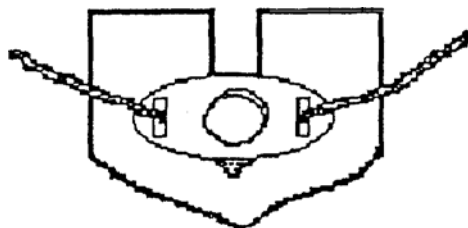
1. Open the 4X4 gauze pad to a 4X8 rectangle.



2. Fold the gauze material long-ways and in half.



4. Slide the gauze dressing around the trach tube.



This tool is intended only as a guideline.
Each person is an individual and responses
may vary. If you have any questions, please
talk to your doctor.

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HOW TO CHANGE YOUR ENTIRE TRACH TUBE (INNER AND OUTER CANNULA)

If you have a mature trach, or a trach that has been flapped (sewn open), your doctor may order your entire trach to be changed. To do this, you will need to have your spare outer and inner cannula available to insert immediately upon removal of your present trach. You will also need the following supplies:

- obturator,
 - Velcro trach collar or trach ties,
1. From the spare trach tube, remove inner cannula and set aside on a clean surface.
 2. Insert the obturator into the outer cannula.
 3. Apply Velcro trach collar or trach ties to the outer cannula as previously described.
 4. Apply pre-folded, folded gauze/soft wick dressing around the outer cannula.
 5. If ordered by your doctor, lubricate the outer cannula prior to inserting

Now your spare trach is ready to be inserted. You should prepare to remove your present trach.

1. While holding your trach plate, unfasten your Velcro strap, or cut your trach ties.
2. Gently remove your entire trach tube (inner and outer cannula) and set aside for later cleaning.
3. Cleanse the skin around the opening (stoma) with warm water. Allow skin to air dry, or you may pat it dry.

*** If your doctor permits, you may apply a thin layer of Bacitracin ointment around your stoma to prevent skin breakdown.

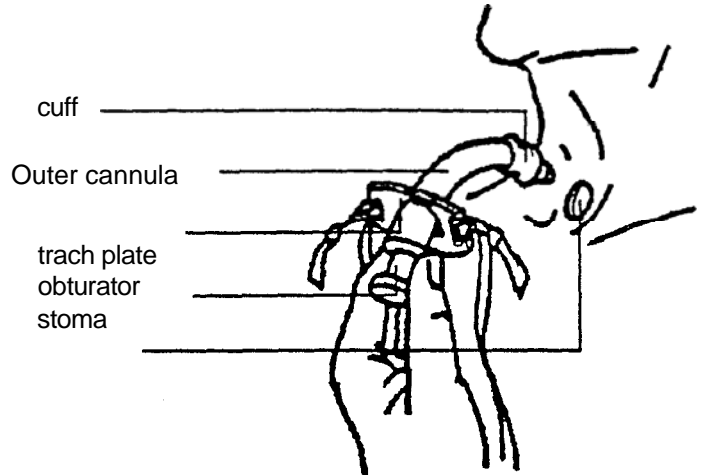
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Now the prepared spare trach is ready to insert:

1. At the time you insert the new trach, take a deep breath and hold it (this will help keep you from coughing it back out).



2. While holding the trach plate in place (outer cannula) remove the obturator.
3. Secure the Velcro trach collar or trach ties.
4. Insert a clean inner cannula into the trach tube. Turn the inner cannula clockwise until it locks in place.
5. Cleanse the trach that was removed as previously described and store for future use.



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Teresa Hunt, RN

Lisa Gentry, RN, RSN

SAFETY TIPS FOR TRACHEOSTOMY PATIENTS

- Always wear some type of identification stating you are a neck breather in case you are injured or involved in an accident. This will alert others to tilt your head back to open your airway if you become unconscious.

Make sure you have proper suctioning equipment that is easily accessible. You may need to suction thick mucous secretions or "plugs" that you are unable to cough out.

- Make sure that other family members know how to care for your trach tube. Instruct them how to operate and suction your trach in case of an emergency.

Keep your home environment humidified. This helps to keep the secretions from your trach tube thin and loose so they can be coughed or suctioned out easily.

Increasing your intake of fluids will help keep your secretions thin and loose.

- Never use tissues or frayed materials to clean your trach; when coughing, never use tissues to cover your trach. Frayed and fly-away materials can be inhaled into your windpipe.

Keep your trach covered, especially when going outside. This helps to warm the outside air and decrease the pollutants (dust etc.) you are inhaling.

Trach bibs (used to cover your trach tube) can be purchased at a medical supply store. A clean cotton T-shirt worn backwards will also work very well.

Keep the skin around your trach tube clean and dry. This will help prevent skin irritation and breakdown as well as preventing infections.

The use of harsh soaps and/or peroxide to clean around the stoma can irritate the trachea and cause increased coughing. These solutions can also lead to skin irritations and breakdown.

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