

Transcript

A Tracheostomy, commonly called a trach, is a personal medical device designed to help you breathe.

Normally you breathe through your nose and mouth, but with a trach, you will breathe through an opening called a stoma, made in your neck below your vocal cords, into your trachea or windpipe. A trach tube is inserted through the opening or 'stoma'. This allows the air that you breathe to travel to your lungs.

You may need a tracheostomy if you: have a blockage in your mouth or throat; have difficulty breathing caused by swelling, injury or lung conditions; have secretions, saliva, food, or liquid going into your lungs; require frequent suctioning of secretions; have had head or neck surgery; or need to use a breathing machine for a long period of time.

You may need a tracheostomy for just a short time, or for the rest of your life, depending on why you have it.

A tracheostomy tube is made up of several parts. The outer cannula fits into the opening in your throat, or stoma, helping it to stay open. The inner cannula fits inside the outer cannula. There are two types of inner cannulas. One type is reusable and locks into place. The other type is disposable and clips into place. The inner cannula can be removed and cleaned to prevent blockages while the outer cannula stays in your stoma. And the neck plate. The neck plate holds the tube in place with ties or a Velcro collar that goes around your neck.

Some trach tubes may be different. However your trach looks, it is important to talk to your healthcare provider about how to care for it to ensure it stays working well.

A trained member of your healthcare team will perform your tracheostomy in the operating room.

As you heal, your healthcare provider will help you adjust to living with a trach. Members of your healthcare team will help you breathe, swallow, communicate and care for your trach and stoma so you can have a healthy active life.