

Transcript

A Tracheostomy can be used for just a short time or for a lifetime, but it must be kept clean, infection free and in good working order to prevent complications. Naturally, your body will produce more mucus when using a trach.

When you breathe through your nose and mouth your body cleans, filters and moisturizes the air going into your lungs. But when you are breathing through a trach, you bypass the mouth and nose. The air getting to your lungs can be dirty and dry, causing a build-up of mucus in your lungs. This mucus can block the trach tube and lead to a chest infection or airway blockage.

There are several steps you can take to avoid a build-up of mucus. If your doctor or speech pathologist says you can have liquids by mouth, drinking plenty of fluids can help.

If you are receiving your nutrition and water through a feeding tube, ask your healthcare provider how much water you should have.

While in the hospital and at home, you will use a humidified trach collar to provide moisture to your airway.

Increase the humidity in your home if possible but don't set it higher than 55%, or mold may grow.

Keep your bedroom cool while you sleep.

Breathing moist air after a shower can improve humidity.

If you still feel like you aren't getting enough moisture into your lungs, talk to your healthcare provider. He or she may be able to recommend other products that can provide humidity to your airway.

When you do have a build-up of mucus, you can try to get rid of it first with deep breathing or by coughing. If you still have mucus, suctioning your trach will remove your secretions best. A clean trach will help you to breathe more easily and prevent infection.

The amount of times that you need to suction your trach will decrease as your airway heals and you adjust to having a trach tube. After you're home you will find there are times that you commonly need to suction your trach.

You may need to suction your tube: when you feel or hear mucus rattling in the airway, before cleaning your inner cannula, when you first wake up in the morning, before you eat, before you go outside, and before you go to sleep at night.

Talk to your healthcare provider about when and how often you should suction your trach.

To suction your trach tube, you will use a suction machine. A small, flexible tube is connected to the suction machine which pulls the mucus out of your trach tube.

Remember to always wash your hands thoroughly before and after you suction your tube.

And wear gloves for added infection control.

When you are suctioning your trach, check to make sure the mucus is thin and clear. If it looks yellow, brown, green, or there is more than usual, contact your healthcare provider.

All parts of the suction machine, including the collection bottle and tubing should be kept clean and disinfected on a regular basis.

You can have a healthy, active life while living with a tracheostomy. When you properly care for your trach, it will remain clear of excess secretions and free of infection, helping you live the life you want to live.