

Transcript

A tracheostomy is an important part of your life. It helps you breathe.

While living with your trach, take steps to increase the amount of moisture getting to your lungs. You may want to adjust the humidity level in your home, keep your bedroom cool while you sleep and if your healthcare provider says you can have liquids by mouth, drink plenty of water.

Know how best to get rid of any build-up of mucus. Try deep breathing, coughing it out or cleaning the inner cannula. Then follow your healthcare providers' instructions on when and how to suction your trach if needed.

Here are a few other things to keep in mind.

You cannot swim with a tracheostomy. Do not get water in your trach. You may be able to use a 'shower shield' to keep water out of your trach when taking a shower.

Protect yourself from infection, and that includes the flu. Get a flu shot. And avoid contact with anyone that has the flu.

Do not smoke. Stay away from smoky places and second hand smoke.

Do not remove the outer cannula unless you are told to do so by your healthcare provider.

And finally, call your healthcare provider if: you feel any pain or discomfort; you have trouble breathing even after coughing, suctioning, or cleaning; you think your outer cannula has moved; or if you notice any signs of infection.

Other reasons to call your doctor include: a fever greater than 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit; pulsations in the neck; increased blood tinged secretions with suctioning; narrowing of the stoma opening; if you have any concerns about your trach or medication; or you see bits of food or tube feeding coming from your trach.

Call 911 if: you have a foreign body stuck in your stoma; you have bleeding that is continuous from your trach or incisions around your neck; you can't breathe; or if your whole trach comes out and you can't get it in or you do not know how to put it back in.