

# Tracheostomy Surgery

You may need a breathing tube if you have throat cancer, a lung or nerve problem, or paralyzed vocal chords.

Or you may need one if something is blocking your airway or if you injured your mouth or neck.

A tracheostomy is a surgery to put the breathing tube through your neck and into your windpipe, or trachea.

The words tracheostomy, tracheotomy, or "trach"

are all used to talk about the surgery and the opening created by the surgery.

You will have the trach as long as you need help breathing.

First, follow your care provider's instructions for how to get ready, including what you can eat or drink and which medicines to take.

Now, here's how the surgery is done.

Before the surgery, you'll get medicine to make you sleep and keep you from feeling pain.

During the surgery, the doctor makes a small cut, an incision, to create an opening in your neck.

Then the doctor puts a breathing tube through the opening and into your trachea.

This tube, called a tracheostomy or trach tube, makes it easier for air to get to your lungs.

After the tube is put in, the opening may be left open or it may be made smaller around the tube with stitches or clips.

The surgery lasts about 30 minutes.

After surgery, you will stay in the hospital until it is safe to go home.

You'll get instructions about how to care for yourself at home.

They will cover things like how you'll breathe, speak, and eat with the trach ...

and how to prevent problems.

Your doctor will also teach you how to take care of your trach at home.

Now you know a bit more about what to expect and how to prepare for a tracheostomy.

And you can always call your care provider if you have questions or concerns.