

Tracheostomy: Returning Home

After you have a tracheostomy, it'll take some time for your body to heal and it may be a few weeks before you can get back to your daily routine.

Here's what you can expect when you get home.

Your neck may be sore.

You may have trouble swallowing.

It may take a few weeks to adjust to living with a trach, but you can expect to feel better each day.

At first, you may have trouble speaking or making sounds.

But with the help of your care team, you'll learn new ways to talk.

You'll also find out how to take care of your trach so that you can prevent infections and keep breathing easily.

You may take a bath in shallow water.

And when you take a shower, aim the shower head at your lower body or back.

Cover the tube so that no water gets in but you can still breathe.

Cover your trach loosely to keep dust, dirt, and bacteria from getting into it.

And try not to breathe in smoke, powders, or aerosol sprays.

Get plenty of rest.

But also, it's important to get some activity.

Try to do light activity, like short walks.

Do a little more, as you feel better, but do not swim, and avoid heavy lifting.

And watch for problems.

If you have severe trouble breathing, or if your trach tube falls out and you can't get it back in, get emergency help right away.

Call your doctor if you have trouble breathing after suctioning, or if you have signs of infection, such as increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness; red streaks leading from your trach; pus draining from your trach; or a fever.

This may seem like a lot.

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But all of these things are important because they help you heal.

Be patient and kind to yourself.

And be sure to call your care provider if you have any questions.