

## **POST OPERATIVE PATIENT INFORMATION**

### **Tracheostomy Care**

It is necessary to clean your tracheostomy tube and the skin around the opening into your trachea daily (even as often as every 8 hours at first) to keep the tube free of mucus secretion and provide adequate opening for your airway as well as to promote healing and prevent infection.

This is the procedure you will follow:

- 1.** Your tracheostomy care kit will include two or three basins, gloves, syringes, brushes, pipe cleaners, forceps, gauze pads, cotton-tipped applicators, a trach dressing, and new ties for your trach tube. These are all the items you will need to cleanse your tube, the skin around the opening in your neck and for replacement of the tube. You will need a mirror on a stand (you don't have to hold it to be able to see the trach opening). You will also need hydrogen peroxide and saline.
- 2.** Choose a comfortable spot with a counter space for your equipment and supplies. Wash your hands thoroughly and open the cleansing set and arrange the items for your convenience. Position the mirror, fill the basins--one with 1/2 hydrogen and 1/2 saline for cleansing: one with saline for rinsing.
- 3.** Look in the mirror, remove the inside tube of your trach only. It will be necessary to turn it first to unlock it from the outside tube--counterclockwise. Drop it into the peroxide solution. Remove soiled dressings from the trach tube. Wet a gauze sponge with peroxide solution, wringing out the excess so it will not get into the trach opening. Cleanse the skin around the trach opening and the outside tube which remains in place with a moistened gauze. You may also have to use moistened cotton tips. Gently dry the skin with gauze square. Watch carefully to avoid pushing any dried drainage into the tracheal opening. Any solution or dried mucus which goes into the airway may trigger coughing spasms. Be sure to keep the outer tube tied during the cleaning procedure so you will not inadvertently cough it out. If the tube is accidentally dislodged, take the tube (all parts) and go directly to the emergency room for reinsertion, **unless you know how to replace it yourself.**
- 4.** After you are finished cleansing the outside tube and your neck, you may place a clean dressing under the tube at your neck, as it is necessary to absorb the secretions between cleansing procedures. Specifically designed trach dressings must be used. Do not cut gauze squares to use, as the loose threads may fall into the trachea. You may replace the ties holding your outer tube if they are soiled. It may be necessary to have someone help you with this as you should keep one hand on the outer tube at all times when it is untied, so a sudden unexpected cough will not dislodge it.

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5. You may clean the inner tube by soaking it in a container with half strength hydrogen peroxide solution with gauze squares, the pipe cleaners, cotton tipped swabs or whatever is necessary to remove all the secretions. Look through the opening to be sure it is clear. When thoroughly clean, rinse it in the saline solution. Allow it to air dry on gauze square. When dry, carefully reinsert, keeping the curved portion pointing down. Turn it so it is locked into the outer tube-- clockwise.
6. Clean and store your supplies, ready for the next trach cleansing procedure.
7. You may cover your trach opening with gauze squares, scarves which match your clothing or loose fitting turtleneck shirts. You should leave the hospital with a supply of soft surgical masks. They are good trach covers at first, soft, absorbent and easy to tie securely. Covering helps to warm and filter the air. Be sure to inspect these coverings for loose threads or lint and remove before wearing.
8. Other things to remember:
- a. Remember to hold gauze square or a tissue over your tracheal opening when you cough, rather than over your mouth.
  - b. You may want to consider a humidifier for your home, especially for your bedroom, as your nose is no longer humidifying and warming the air for you.
  - c. You must keep your tracheal opening covered when bathing or showering. Trach shower covers are available. You may also wish to hold a dry washcloth in your mouth and hang it down over your tracheal opening during bathing.
  - d. Do not use aerosol sprays such as deodorants; you may accidentally spray these into your tracheal opening.

If you are uncertain about any of the above items or have any questions, please contact our office at (702) 834-5886 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. After hours, if you have an emergency, go to the emergency room or call the office number and you will be connected to the on-call physician.

My postoperative instructions have been explained to me, I understand their meaning and a copy has been given to me.

Patient/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Nurse: \_\_\_\_\_