Tracheostomy Suctioning

Follow these steps

1. Gather these supplies:
   - Suction machine
   - Suction catheter kit
   - Small bowl or you may use the tray from the suction catheter kit if it is plastic
   - Water

2. Wash your hands well with soap and water. If you are a caregiver, put on the gloves that came with the kit.

3. Pour water into the small bowl or tray.

4. Connect the suction catheter to the tubing on the suction machine.

5. Turn on the suction machine. Check the suction by dipping the end of the catheter into the water. Cover the thumb hole on the catheter to apply suction and then release.

6. Insert the catheter into the trach tube. Guide the catheter to the end of the tube about 3 to 3 ½ Inches or when you start to cough. **Do NOT cover the thumb hole when you insert the catheter. Do NOT force the catheter if you feel a large amount of pressure.**

7. When the catheter is in place, cover the thumb hole and start to suction.

8. As you slowly pull the catheter out, roll the catheter between your thumb and forefinger and move your thumb on and off of the thumb hole. This is called intermittent suction. **Do NOT cover the thumb hole the entire time you are pulling out the catheter.**

9. Suction for no longer than 10 to 15 seconds.
10. After suctioning, clear the catheter and tubing by dipping the catheter tip into the water and applying suction.
11. Take time to rest and catch your breath for 30 to 60 seconds between each time you suction.
12. Repeat steps 6 through 11 until your airway is clear.
13. Turn off the suction machine. Throw away the used catheter, tray and water unless you were given other instructions.

**Call your doctor right away if you have:**

- Bright red blood
- Yellow, brown or green drainage
- Bad smelling drainage
- Secretions that are thicker than normal