Tracheostomy Tubes

A tracheostomy is a small hole made through the front of the neck into the windpipe (trachea). The hole is called a stoma. A tracheostomy (trach) tube is a small curved tube that fits into the stoma to keep the hole from closing.

When a trach tube is needed

There are many reasons why a person may need a trach. Some of these include:

- To allow passage of oxygen.
- To remove mucus from the lungs.
- To be put on a breathing machine if the person is unable to breathe on their own.
- To open the airway if the windpipe is blocked.
- After surgery of the mouth, upper airway or neck to decrease swelling. Swelling is more common with surgery to these areas.

The parts of a trach tube

There are many kinds of trach tubes. You have a ______________________________ tube. It is a metal/plastic (circle one) trach tube that has the following parts if marked:

- **Outer Cannula:**
  The outer cannula is placed in the stoma to keep the hole from closing.

- **Inner Cannula:**
  The inner cannula fits into the outer tube, like a liner. You can remove the inner cannula for changing or cleaning. Cleaning is done at least 1 to 2 times each day.
- **Obturator:**
  The obturator is only used when putting the outer cannula into the stoma.

- **Cuff:**
  The cuff is a balloon around the outer cannula. It is inflated by putting air through the cuff inflation line. The cuff may be inflated if you are on a breathing machine (ventilator) or if you are having a problem with choking.
  
  Important note: Your tracheostomy tube may not have a cuff.

- **Cuff Inflation Line with Pilot Balloon:**
  The air is put through this tube when you inflate the cuff. The pilot balloon will inflate when the cuff inside is inflated.

---

**Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.**

For more health information, contact the Library for Health Information at **614-293-3707** or e-mail **health-info@osu.edu**.

© 2000 - June 30, 2016, The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center.