



Patient & Family Guide  
2017

# Changing Your Trach Tube



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# Changing Your Trach Tube

Your entire trach tube should be changed about once a month, or sooner if you notice an odour (smell) or get a bad taste in your mouth. Your doctor or nurse will tell you how often your tube should be changed.

You may learn how to change your own tube, someone who lives with you may learn, VON nurses can come to your home to change it, or your doctor may change it in their office or in a clinic.

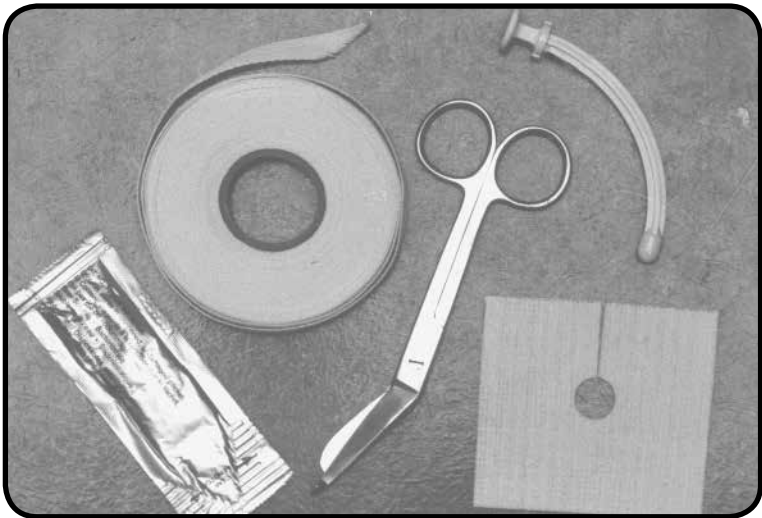
**Always have someone with you when your trach tube is being changed.**

When you go home from the hospital, you will have 2 trach tubes. While you are wearing one, you can store the extra, clean tube in its box.

**What are your questions?  
Please ask. We are here to help you.**

## You will need these supplies:

- Extra trach tube (with inner cannula and obturator/guide – the same size as the one you are wearing)
- Twill tape (24 inches long, 1/4 inch or 1/2 inch wide), or Velcro® trach holder
- Scissors
- Clean hand towel
- Clean, damp, warm washcloth
- Water-based lubricant (e.g. K-Y® Jelly)
- Tissues (e.g. Kleenex®)
- Tracheostomy dressing (if desired)
- Suction supplies (if needed)



## Getting ready

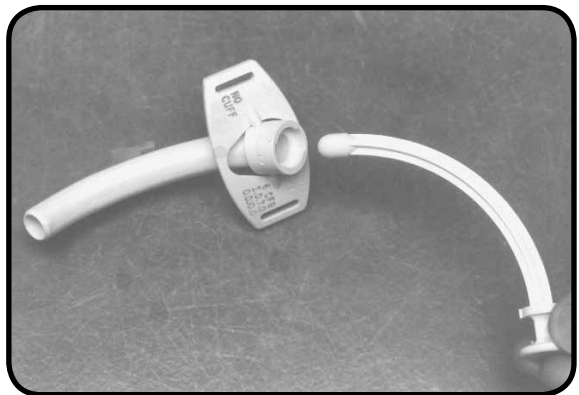
1. Place all of your supplies on the table in front of you.
2. Wash your hands well.
3. Cough or suction if needed. This clears the airway of secretions. Take a few deep breaths.
4. Sit comfortably in front of a mirror so that you can see your tube.

## Now you are ready to change your trach tube.

Changing your tube may make you cough or have a small amount of bleeding. This is normal, but call your doctor if the bleeding continues or there is a large amount.

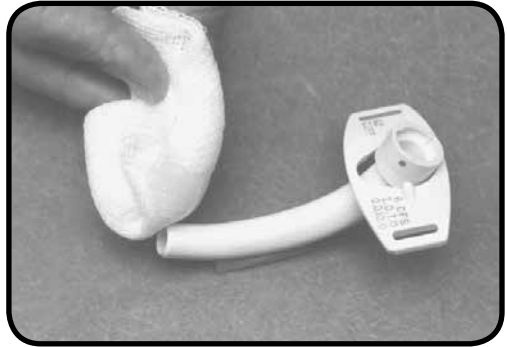
## Changing your trach tube

1. Place your extra trach tube on a clean towel in front of you.
2. Thread the trach tie through one hole on the outer cannula of your extra trach tube.
3. Place the obturator/guide into the extra trach tube. (The inner cannula is not used at this time.)



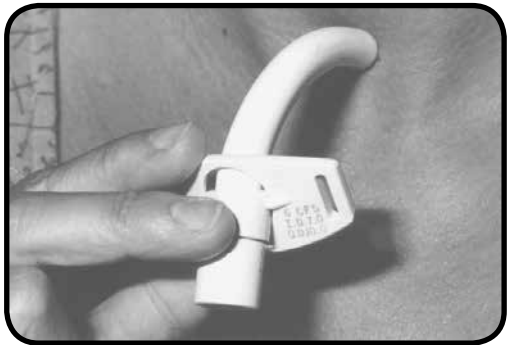
4. Put a small amount of water-based lubricant on a gauze sponge or tissue.

5. Using the sponge or tissue, apply a thin film of jelly over the outer cannula and the obturator tip of the extra tube.



6. Hold the outer cannula of the tube you are wearing with one hand. Carefully cut the trach ties with your other hand.

7. Remove your trach tube by pulling it steadily down and out. Examine your stoma for any signs of infection or irritation.



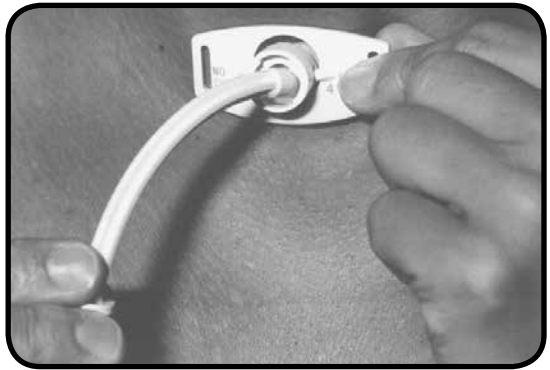
8. With a clean damp washcloth, clean around your stoma. Remove any crusts or secretions. Dry your stoma area. (See the patient guide *Tracheostomy Care At Home*).

9. Put your thumb over the obturator as you insert the new tube with a gentle inward pressure.



Use the same motion you use to put in your inner cannula. The tip will move down into your trachea.

10. Hold the outer cannula. Remove the obturator.



11. Bring both ends of the trach ties around your neck and do the same procedure as for changing your trach ties.

12. Insert the inner cannula and lock into place.

13. Place trach dressing between skin and outer cannula (if desired).

If you reuse your trach tube, you now need to very carefully clean the one you took out. Clean it with sterile water and hydrogen peroxide (half and half), then do a final rinse with sterile water. Let it dry completely. Do not boil or sterilize the tube with any chemicals. Once it's dry, store it in a clean dry place.

This pamphlet is just a guide. If you have questions, please talk to your health care provider. We are here to help you.

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Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.