

Family Education Sheet

Tracheostomy (Trach) Tube Change



Boston Children's Hospital

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How do I know when to change my child's trach tube?

It's a good idea to plan a routine trach change before your child eats to lower the chance that your child will throw up. Your child's doctor will tell you how often to change the trach tube. You'll need to change it before the next scheduled time if there is an emergency (see below).

When is it an emergency?

You need to change your child's trach tube right away if:

- The tube is blocked
- The tube slips out of your child's trachea
- A suction catheter cannot pass through the trach tube
- The tube/cuff does not stay blown up (inflated)
- Your child shows signs of having trouble breathing:
 - Skin is pale or looks blue
 - Muscles between the ribs pull inward (called retractions)
 - Flaring of the nostrils
 - A higher heart rate

- You do not see your child's chest rising and falling as usual (or at all)

What supplies do I need to change a trach tube?

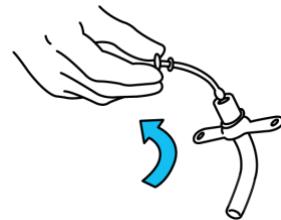
To change the tube you will need:

- Oximeter
- Self-inflating resuscitation bag with pop-off valve and facemask
- Oxygen
- Suction machine and the right size catheter
- 2 trach tubes: 1 that is the same size and 1 that is one size smaller
- Trach tie
- Stoma dressing
- Syringe
- Water-soluble lubricant (washes off in water)
- Scissors
- Clean, moistened gauze

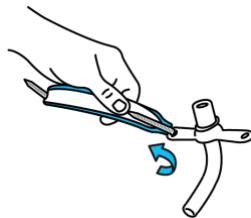
How do I prepare to change the trach tube?



$$\begin{array}{r} + \\ \text{# of mm} \\ + 10 \text{ mm} \\ \hline \end{array} \begin{array}{r} \# of mm \\ \div 10 \\ \hline \# of cm \end{array}$$



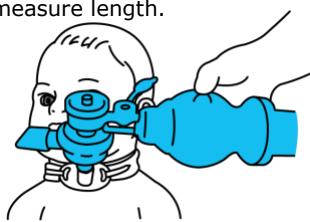
- 1 Gather supplies you need to change the trach tube.



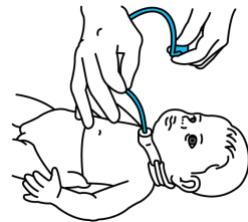
- 2 Check new tube with cuff inflation (if this applies). Make sure the cuff on the new trach inflates evenly.



- 3 Re-measure suction depth with sterile catheter, adding 1 centimeter (10 mm) to measure length.



- 4 Practice removing the obturator from the new trach tube.



- 5 Cut the new trach tie and prepare the stoma dressing. Put tie on the new trach.

- 6 Apply water-soluble lubricant to the end of the tube.

- 7 Give or increase supplemental oxygen 5 minutes before changing the tube if your doctor recommends that.

- 8 Suction if there is a build up of secretions.

For double lumen tubes:

- Make sure the obturator is in place in the tube.
- Check that the disposable inner cannula is readily available for insertion (if your tube has one) once the tube is in your child.

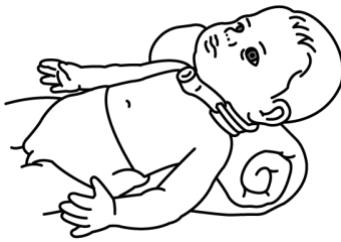
For adult Bivona tubes: Make sure the obturator lock is working the right way.

Whom can I call if I have questions?

If your child needs emergency help, call 911 right away.

For more information, please call your primary care provider.

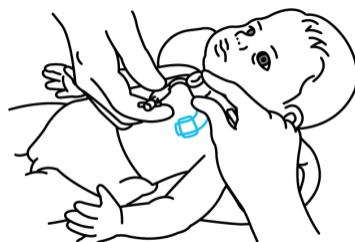
This Family Education Sheet is available in [Arabic](#), [Spanish](#), and [Laotian](#).

How do I change the trach tube?

1 You will need two people to change the trach tube. Position your child with stoma exposed by putting a rolled towel under his or her shoulders.



2 Unfasten the trach ties on your child and take off the dressing.



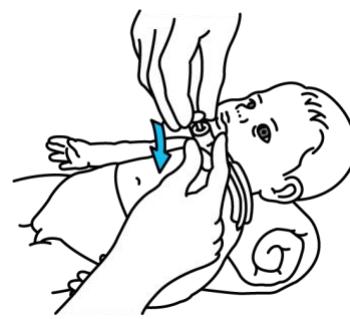
3 Deflate the cuff (if this applies).



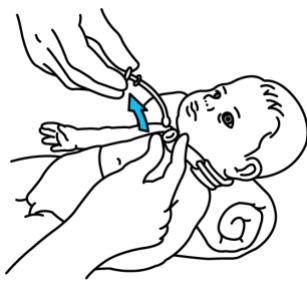
4 Take out the trach tube.



5 Wipe the stoma with moistened gauze and then wipe dry.



6 Place new tube with the obturator in the stoma, following the curve of the airway.



7 Right away, take the obturator out while holding the trach in place. For double lumen tubes: Insert disposable inner cannula and secure side clips in place.



8 Place your child back on his or her previous support. Let your child catch their breath. Place the dressing under the tube.



9 Secure the tube ties and make sure 1 finger fits comfortably under the tie.

10 Watch to see if your child is comfortable.

11 Make sure to check your child's skin color, oxygen levels and heart rate. Check to see if your child's chest is rising and falling normally, and that the trach tube is secure.

12 Write down the date you changed the tube.