

TRACHEOSTOMY

What is a tracheostomy?

A tracheostomy is making an opening into the windpipe (trachea) through the neck, after which a tube (tracheostomy tube) is placed into the opening and taped around the neck.

After surgery

You will breathe through the tube instead of the nose or mouth. You will not be able to talk after the tube placement (as the breath does not pass through vocal cords). However, in due course of time, you will be taught how to speak with the tube.

For up to a few days, it's not unusual to have a little bleed in and around the stoma. You may observe sutures near to stoma site or on the tube for fixation, which will be removed when needed to.

POST OP CARE

Cleaning

The tube needs to be cleaned regularly, can be done with suction or by removing the inner tube and placing it back after cleaning with hydrogen peroxide (will be demonstrated to you).

Humidification

As the function of filtration and humidification (done by a nose) is bypassed the air entering the tube needs both, for which filters and nebulization are required.

Dressing

Dressing around the tube if soiled can be replaced, if possible you are advised to inspect the skin around the stoma. Report any hardness, redness, yellow or green discharge.

When to report to the hospital

Report to your doctor if you observe-

- Irregular heartbeat
- Increasing pain
- Difficulty breathing even after cleaning inner tube or suctioning
- Thick secretions that you are unable to clean.
- Frank bleeding from site or tube