

# Care of Your Tracheostomy Tube

## Introduction

- A tracheostomy is a surgical procedure to create an airway in your neck to help you breathe properly.
- A tracheostomy tube or “trach” (pronounced “trake”) tube creates an opening that keeps your airway clear.
- The trach tube consists of an outer tube (outer cannula), an inner tube (inner cannula) and an obturator which is only used when the entire tube is replaced. The trach tube is held in place by a soft collar.

When the trach tube is in place, you should be able to talk, eat and carry out your normal daily activities. The trach tube is usually not permanent. Your doctor will remove it when the swelling in your mouth and neck is reduced to a level that enables you to breathe safely without the trach tube. The trach tube must be kept clean to maintain a good airway and to help prevent lung (respiratory) infections.

It is very important to wear the inner tube at all times and to keep it CLEAN.

## Cleaning

To keep the trach tube and the site where it is inserted clean, you will need:

- a trach tube brush (reusable if rinsed after each use)
- 4”x4” gauze pads (split and non-split types)

## Follow these cleaning instructions

- Remove the inner tube from the outer tube.
- Rinse the inner tube under running water.
- Push the trach tube brush through the inner tube several times under running water.
- Rinse the inner tube again.
- Shake out excess water.
- Re-insert the inner tube into the outer tube and turn until locked in place.
- Clean the site with damp sterile gauze pads.
- Dry the site with sterile gauze pads.
- If necessary, slide a split, sterile gauze pad around the trach tube.
- Repeat as often as necessary to keep the inner tube and site clean.

## **When to Call Your Doctor**

Call your doctor if you:

- **have a temperature of 100.4 F (38°C)** or higher and/or chills
- have secretions around or in the inner tube that change color
- begin to form pus around the trach tube

## **Questions or Concerns**

If you have any questions or concerns during office hours, please call the thoracic clinic at **716-845-3167**.

After hours, call **716-845-2300** and our Call Center will assist you.