

Let's Talk About...

Nasal Suctioning

Many problems can cause too much mucus to collect in the back of the throat nose or mouth. Some of these are infections or problems with the nerves or the brain that prevent coughing or swallowing. When this happens, it helps to clear mucus from your child's nose, back of the throat, and/or mouth so your child can breathe more easily. There are a variety of ways to do this, including BBG™ suctioning, bulb suctioning, and nasopharyngeal suctioning.

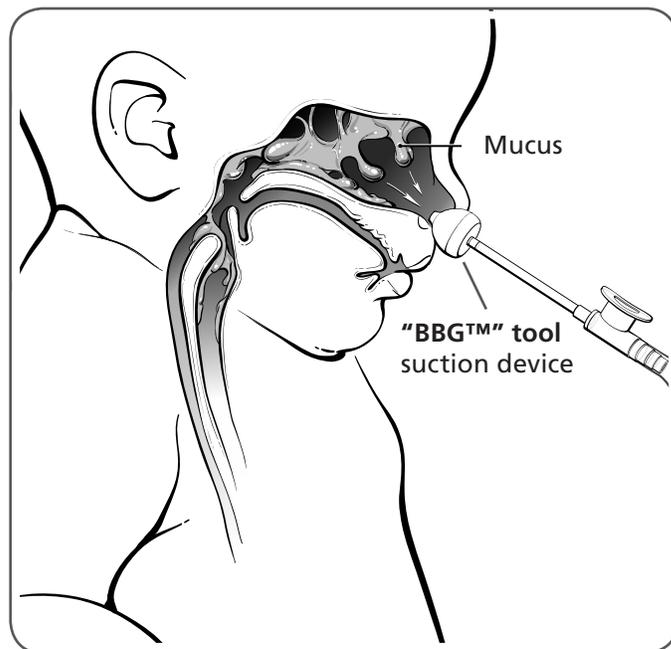
While in the hospital, one of your child's healthcare providers (a nurse, respiratory therapist, or doctor) may decide that your child needs to be suctioned when:

- 1 The healthcare provider can see or hear mucus in your child's nose or mouth.
- 2 Your child needs oxygen or more oxygen than usual.
- 3 The healthcare provider hears sounds in your child's chest that mean there is too much mucus in the lungs.
- 4 Your child is working hard to breathe, breathing too fast, using more muscles to breathe, or cannot breathe and eat at the same time.

When your child needs to be suctioned, the nurse or respiratory therapist will use a BBG™ suction device or bulb suction. If it is not felt these methods will clear the mucus well enough, nasopharyngeal (pronounced nay-zo-fair-in-gee-all), or NP suctioning, may be used.

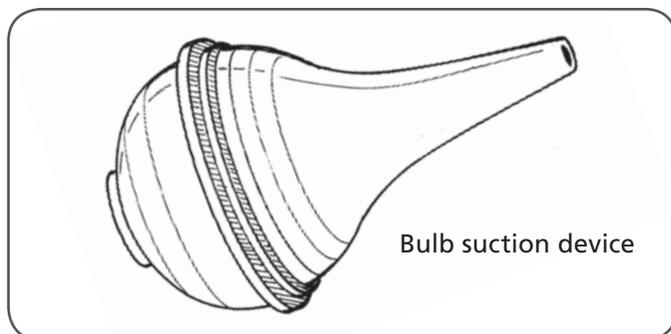
What are the differences between BBG™ suction and bulb suction?

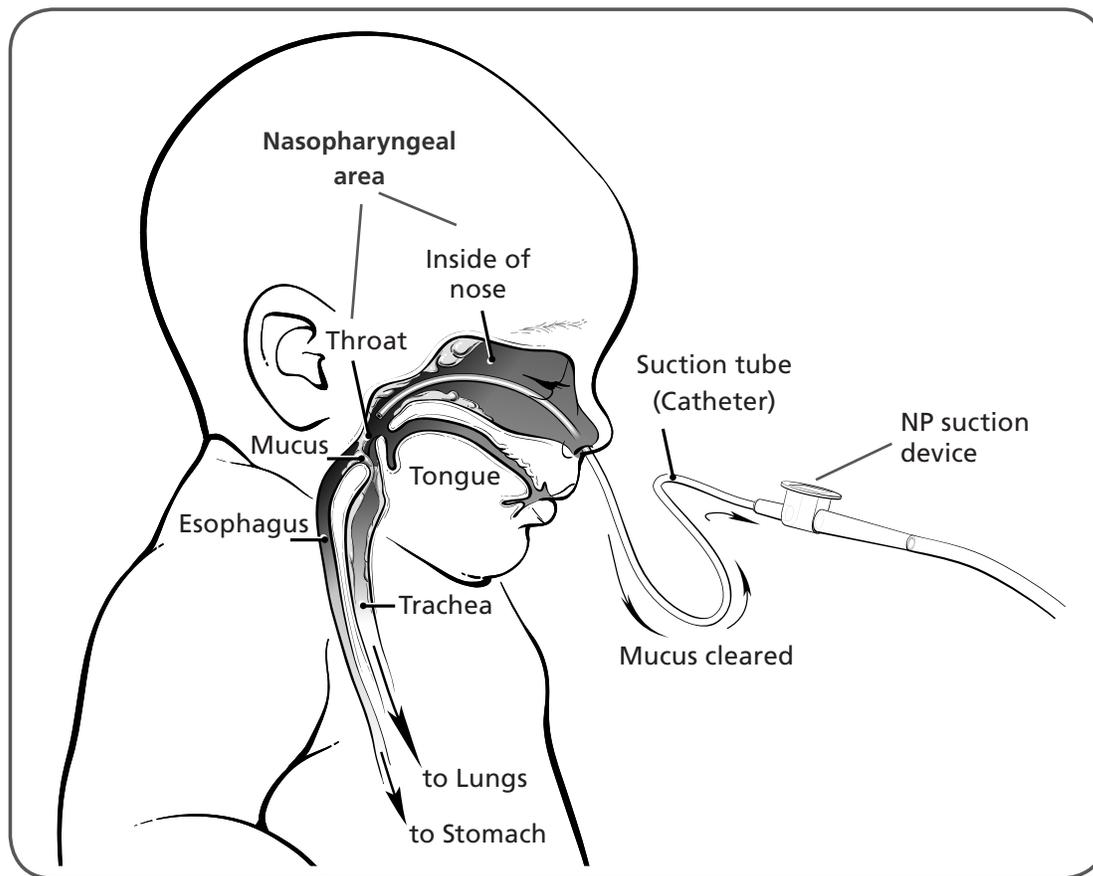
A BBG™ suction device is a suction tube that may be used while your child is in the hospital. It has a small bulb-shaped piece of plastic at one end. This end is designed to be placed against the nostril, covering it completely. The other end is connected to suction.



Suction can be turned on to remove mucus without having to place anything inside the nose.

The healthcare provider may instead choose to use bulb suction. A bulb suction device is a round, rubbery object with a short tube that is used to remove mucus. You can use bulb suction at home to clear your child's clogged nose or mouth. A stuffy nose can make children unable to breathe easily, sleep, or eat very well. Since babies and some children cannot blow their noses, you may have to remove mucus with a suction bulb.





What is NP Suction?

If the BBG™ or bulb suction are unable to remove enough of the mucus, NP suction may be used while your child is in the hospital. NP suction is a way to remove extra mucus from the back of the throat. Nasopharyngeal refers to the nose and upper part of the throat.

A thin tube is attached to a larger suction tube. Most children will need to be held still during the procedure. The healthcare provider will gently put this small tube in your child's nose until it touches the back of the throat. Then the healthcare provider will slowly pull the tube out of your child's nose while the suction takes out the mucus. This will usually make your child cough. The coughing helps bring the mucus up to the back of the throat so it can be taken out. The healthcare provider may put drops of salt water in your child's nose to help loosen the mucus. This will allow the tube to slip into the nose more easily. They may need to suction each side of the nose several times to get all the mucus out. After your child's nose is clear, the healthcare provider may suction your child's mouth too.

How long will my child need suctioning?

This depends on how sick your child is, the amount and thickness of the mucus, and how well your child responds to suctioning. When your child is feeling better and is able to breathe comfortably, sleep well, and eat easily, suctioning may no longer be needed. This may be true even if the nose sounds very stuffy. Sometimes salt water drops alone are enough to clear out the nose. If salt water drops alone are not working, then use these drops followed by bulb suctioning.

How can I suction my child at home?

Usually children stay in the hospital until mucus can be managed with bulb suctioning and breathing is not difficult. Family members are taught to use bulb suction to help clear mucus when at home.

Here are some tips for bulb suctioning:

- 1 Have a tissue ready to clean the bulb between suctionings.
- 2 Find a way to keep your child from moving his head too much and grabbing the suction bulb.

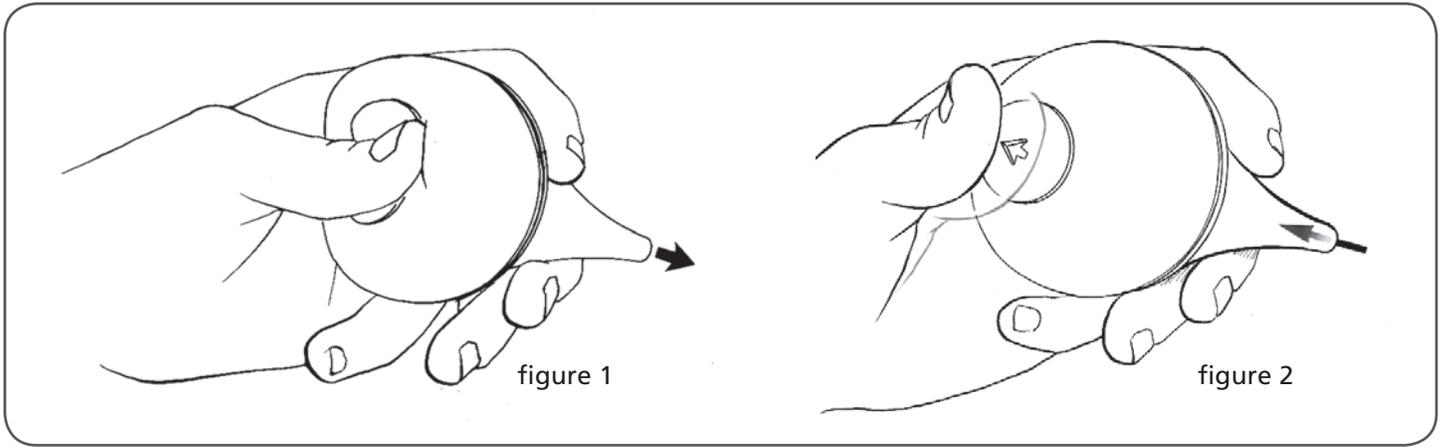


figure 1

figure 2

- If there is only one person available to suction, you can use the following hold to allow you to have one free hand for suctioning:
 - Wrap your child’s body in a towel or blanket, making sure arms and hands are inside the bundle. Your child may be able to wiggle out of these blankets, so keep one hand on your child at all times. Make sure you hold their head still to prevent injuring the inside of the nose.
- If there are two people available, one person should gently hold your child’s head with one hand while using the other hand to hold both of your child’s hands out of the way. The second person will suction.

3 To use the suction bulb properly:

- Place enough drops of salt water into each nostril to loosen the fluids and allow for easier suctioning. Buy drops recommended by your doctor or pharmacist. Do not try to make this yourself. Never use over-the-counter nose drops that contain any medicine.
- Hold the bulb with the tip between your first and middle fingers (see figure 1).
- With your thumb, squeeze the bulb and push all the air out.
- Gently, insert the tip into a nostril.
- If possible, hold the opposite nostril closed right before releasing the suction bulb.

- Slowly release your thumb on the bulb. As you release your thumb, mucus will be suctioned out of the nose (see figure 2).
- Remove the suction bulb and release the other nostril.
- Clean the mucus from the bulb by squeezing it out onto the tissue. Rinse the bulb with water.
- It may be helpful to also suction your child’s mouth. When suctioning the mouth, be sure to put the tip of the suction bulb in the side of your child’s mouth to avoid causing your child to gag.

4 Allow time for your child to recover and breathe in between suctioning attempts.

Are there any complications from suctioning?

- If your child’s nose is suctioned often, the inside of the nose may swell, dry out, become irritated, and bleed. Suctioning should be done as gently as possible and only as often as it is needed. In the hospital your child will likely need to be suctioned quite often. As your child gets better the need to suction will decrease.

Can I reuse the suction bulb?

Use a new suction bulb for each illness. Use a different suction bulb for each child. When your child is better, throw the suction bulb away.