

Let's Talk About...

Tracheostomy

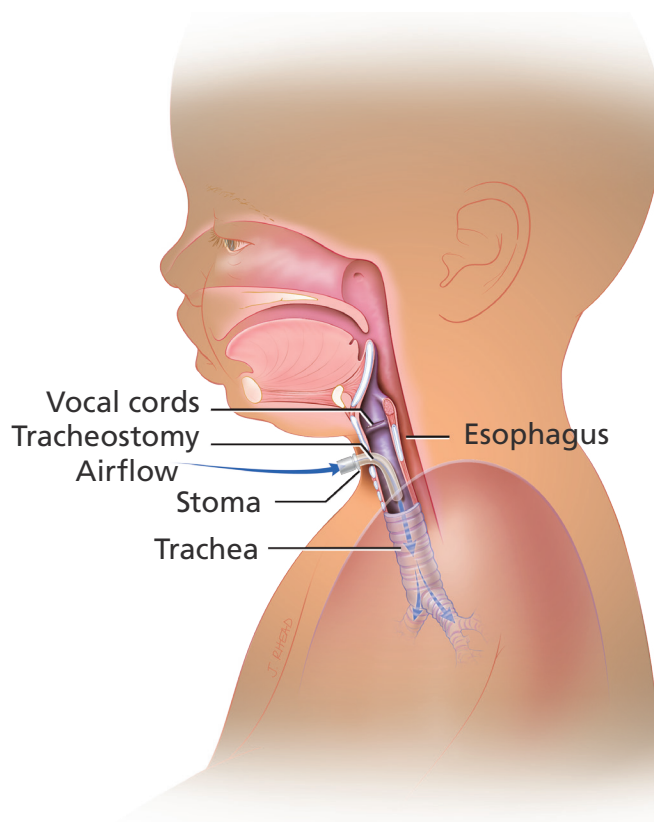
A tracheostomy is an opening made in the neck into the windpipe (trachea) during surgery. A tube is inserted into the opening (called a stoma), and your child breathes through the tube. A tracheostomy helps your child breathe when they can't breathe as usual through their mouth or nose.

Not every child needs or is a candidate for a tracheostomy. Your medical team will help you decide if your child has a medical condition that is appropriate to treat with a tracheostomy.

Who may need a tracheostomy?

Your child may need a tracheostomy if:

- They have problems that make it hard to cough up mucus
- They have a medical condition that needs ongoing help from a breathing machine
- They have a blocked upper airway due to something like paralyzed vocal cords, a tumor, or trauma



How does a tracheostomy work?

A tracheostomy allows the air your child breathes to go through the trach tube directly into the lungs. Air no longer goes to the upper airway, which includes the mouth, nose, epiglottis (opening to the trachea), and vocal cords. Because of this, air is not warmed, humidified, or filtered.

What does a tracheostomy look like?

There are many different types and sizes of tracheostomy tubes. Your child's medical team will decide which type is best for your child.

How does my child eat with a tracheostomy tube?

The tracheostomy tube may affect your child's ability to eat. Some children will need a feeding tube, and some children may eat normally. A speech therapist can help determine if and when your child is ready to eat by mouth after a tracheostomy tube is placed.

How does my child speak with a tracheostomy tube?

When your child has a tracheostomy tube, air goes through the trach opening and no longer goes through the vocal cords. This means your child can't talk the same way as before. A speech therapist can help your child learn to communicate with a tracheostomy tube in place.

How do I care for my child's tracheostomy tube?

A team of medical professionals will help you learn to care for your child and their tracheostomy tube. This may include:

- Primary care doctors
- Physical therapists
- Respiratory therapists
- Home health caregivers
- Nurses
- Equipment supply companies
- Speech therapists
- Occupational therapists



Trach with cuff

Obturator

Inner cannula

What if I have questions?

If you have other questions, contact your child's healthcare provider.

Notes

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