

Tracheostomy Care: How to Prevent Trach Infections

Having a tracheostomy makes your child have a higher risk of respiratory infections. Tracheitis is an infection of the trachea common in children with trach tubes. Your child may need medical treatment.

Ways to Prevent Infections

- Wash your hands well before and after caring for any part of your child's trach.
- Make sure your child's shots (immunizations) are up-to-date unless, their doctor or health care provider tells you otherwise.
- Clean all equipment and supplies.
- Do not let people who are sick around your child. Do not let them hold or kiss your child. Ask the person to visit when they are well.

Signs of Infection

Even when you are as careful as possible, your child may still get an infection. Call their doctor or health care provider if you notice any of these signs of infection:

- Fever higher than 100.4° Fahrenheit (F) or 38° Celsius (C)
- Mucus that is thicker than normal
- Yellow or green mucus
- Mucus with bright or dark red blood (a small amount of blood is okay)
- Stinky mucus
- Cough
- Fast heart rate
- Suctioning more than normal
- Redness, pain, swelling, or warmth at trach stoma site

Testing for Infection

A trach culture is a test to find out what is causing an infection. It is normal to have some germs in a trach tube. When your child is well, these bacteria do not cause problems. If your child becomes sick with a cold or virus, the bacteria can cause an infection that needs to be treated. The doctor or health care provider will order a trach culture if your child needs it.