

Tracheostomy Care: How to Prevent Trach Infections

How to prevent infections

- Below are things you can do to prevent tracheostomy infections:
- Wash your hands well before and after caring for any part of your child's trach.
- Make sure your child's immunizations (shots) are up-to-date unless your doctor tells you otherwise.
- Clean all equipment and supplies as instructed by the home health company.
- Avoid exposing your child to people who are sick.
- If a person who has a cold or is ill wants to hold or kiss your child, say no. Ask the person to visit your child when he or she is well.

Tracheitis

Tracheitis is a bacterial infection of the trachea. It is common in children with trach tubes. The doctor will give your child medicine to treat the infection. Your child will take it by mouth, IV, or by breathing it in.

Signs of infection

Even when you are as careful as possible, your child may still get an infection. Signs of infection are:

- Fever over 100.4° F or what the doctor advises you
- Mucus that is yellow or green
- Mucus that is thicker than usual
- Coughing up mucus with bright or dark red blood in it. A little blood can be OK.
- Pulse rate over _____ when your child is resting or sleeping
- Cough
- Mucus that has a foul odor
- Increased need for suctioning

Trach cultures

A trach culture finds out what type of bacteria may be causing an infection. It is normal to have some bacteria at all times with 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 will order a trach culture if your child needs it.