Safety Tips for a Tracheostomy

The most important safety tip
• Your child must always be with a person who is trained in trach care. This person needs to know how to suction, change the trach, do CPR, and care for your child in an emergency.
• Your child must always have trach care equipment and supplies nearby.

Feeding
• Stay in the room when the child eats.
• Hold infants when you feed them, and burp often.
• Always hold the bottle. Do not prop it.
• Do not let food enter the trach tube.

Health
• Wash your hands often, especially when you touch your child.
• Keep sanitizing hand gel (with 62% ethyl alcohol or more) in several places around your home, and use it often.
• Keep your child away from people who are sick.
• Keep your child’s shots (immunizations) up to date.
• When your child gets sick, call the doctor right away.

Clothing
• It’s easier to dress and undress your child if the clothes are one size too big.
• Clothes should never block the trach tube. Don’t use turtlenecks, crew necks, or shirts that button in the back.
• Clothes should not be furry or fuzzy.
• Do not use plastic bibs, buttons, or necklaces.
• You may use a Tilson trach guard. This prevents the tube from being blocked by clothes, bedding, gauze, and the chin.
Water
• Water that gets into the trach goes straight into the lungs. If this happens, suction the trach right away.
• Stay with your child whenever near water.
• When in the bath or shower, cover the trach with a mist collar mask, or heat and moisture exchanger (HME).
• Baths should be in shallow water.
• No splashing.
• Wash your child’s hair by holding the head and pouring water toward the back of the head.
• Keep a towel near so you can keep the trach area dry.
• No swimming.

Clean air
• Do not use perfume, powder, or aerosol sprays around your child.
• Do not use chemicals that make your child cough. Do not cook foods at high temperatures that can cause smoke. These can make it hard for your child to breathe.
• Do not let anyone smoke in the home.
• Anyone who smells of smoke should change clothes and wash his or her hands.
• Keep the home free of dust, lint, and hair.
• Do not keep pets that shed or have fine hair that could go into the trach.
• Use an HME to protect from cold air, wind, dust, and smog.

Play and toys
• Watch your child and watch other children playing with your child.
• Do not let your child play with toys with small parts that could fit into the trach. This means no marbles, beads, or Legos.
• Do not let your child play with latex balloons.
• Keep your child away from sand and chalk dust.
• You can use an HME to protect the trach. Make sure the filter is in the HME at all times.

Transportation
• Fill out the form Emergency Information for the Child with a Tracheostomy, #808. Keep it up to date. Put a copy in the To Go Bag and keep another at home.
• Always have the To Go Bag with the child. This has emergency information and supplies.
• Take the To Go Bag with you, even if it is a short trip.
• Make sure all medical equipment is either secured with a seat belt in an open seat or wedged under the seat with pillows, foam, or blankets.
• Always check to be sure you have plenty of power supply or extra batteries for medical equipment as needed.

Community
• Tell your power company your child has a trach. If the power goes out, they may help you get the power back sooner.
• Tell your police, fire, and ambulance service you have a child with a trach. Let them know if your child uses oxygen or a ventilator.

Now that you’ve read this:
☐ Tell you nurse or doctor what you can do to keep your child safe.
   (Check when done.)

If you have any questions or concerns,
☐ call your child’s doctor or ☐ call ______________________

If you want to know more about child health and illness,
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children’s Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016
602-933-1400
866-933-6459
www.phoenixchildrens.com
Facebook: facebook.com/theemilycenter
Twitter: @emilycenter
Pinterest: pinterest.com/emilycenter

Disclaimer
The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children’s Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.
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Name of Health Care Provider: _______________________________
Date returned: ____________ ☐ db

Family Review of Handout

Health care providers: Please teach families with this handout.
Families: Please let us know what you think of this handout.

Would you say this handout is hard to read? ☐ Yes ☐ No
easy to read? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please circle the parts of the handout that were hard to understand.

Would you say this handout is interesting to read? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Why or why not?

Would you do anything differently after reading this handout? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what?

After reading this handout, do you have any questions about the subject? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what?

Si usted desea esta información en español, por favor pídasela a su enfermero o doctor.

#1115
Is there anything you don’t like about the drawings?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No

If yes, what?

What changes would you make in this handout to make it better or easier to understand?

Please return your review of this handout to your nurse or doctor or send it to the address below.

The Emily Center  602-933-1395
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Phoenix Children’s Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016-7710

Thank you for helping us!