

Name of Child: _____ Date: _____

How to Collect a Trach Culture

A child with a trach can get infections in his or her airway (**trachea**). A doctor who thinks your child may have an infection will order a **trach culture**. This means you take some mucus from your child's trach and send it to the lab. The people who work in the lab will look for germs in the mucus (called a **culture**). If germs are found, the lab tells your doctor, and the doctor will order medicine for your child to kill the germs (**antibiotic**). A trach culture can only be done if the doctor orders it.

It is important to keep the specimen trap sterile - The only thing that should touch the inside of it is your child's mucus when you suction the trach.

Important information

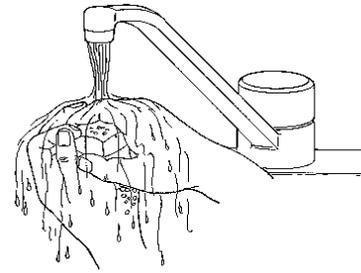
Wear gloves when taking care of body fluids, such as mucous and phlegm. Insurance and home care companies many not supply gloves. You can buy gloves at your local pharmacy. If you cannot get gloves, ask your doctor or nurse what to do.

What you need:

- Suction machine
- Catheter
- Saline drops
- Specimen trap (do not open the specimen trap until you need to collect mucus)
- Gloves
- Soap or alcohol-based hand rub
- Paper towels

What to do:

1. Clean your hands with soap and water for 15 to 30 seconds. Rinse, then dry your hands with clean paper towels.



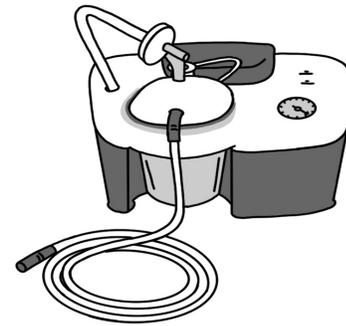
Wash your hands with soap and water for 15 to 30 seconds.

If your hands are not visibly dirty, you can use alcohol-based hand rub to clean them using the following steps:

1. Put enough alcohol-based hand rub to fill the palm of your hand.
2. Spread the hand rub over all parts of your hands.
3. Rub hands until dry.

2. Turn on the suction machine.

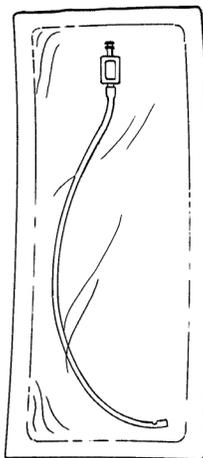
3. Put on clean gloves.



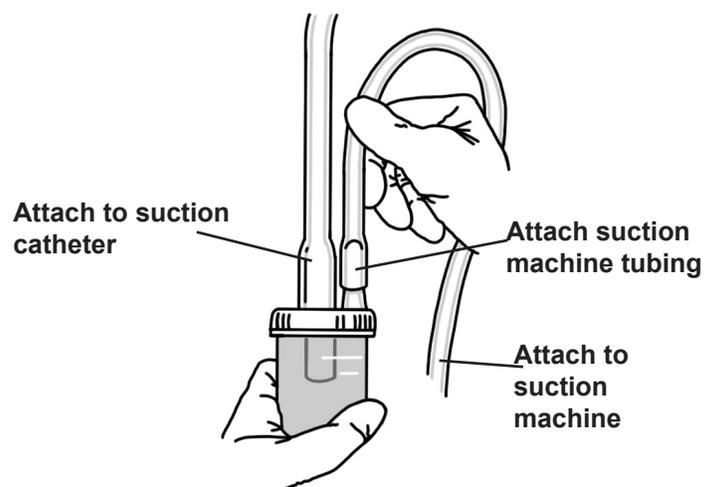
Turn on the suction machine.

4. Open the sterile specimen trap package and connect the short, hard end of the trap to the suction machine tubing.

5. Use a new sterile catheter. Do not touch the end of the catheter with your hands. Connect the long, soft end of the specimen trap to the suction catheter.



Use a new catheter.



How to suction:

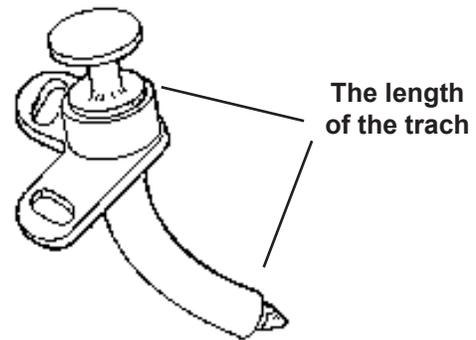
- Put your thumb over the air vent, to close it and start the suction. With premeasured suctioning, you can suction going in and out of the trach tube. As you suction, twirl the catheter between your thumb and finger so the catheter moves easily along the side of the trach tube.

Do not stir the catheter with your whole hand. Only the catheter should move, not the trach tube. If the trach tube rubs on the inside of the child's airway, it could get sore and bleed.

If you can, collect the mucus without using saline.

How far to suction:

- Put the catheter in the trach only about 1/2 centimeter past the tip of the trach tube.



How long to suction:

- Suction for no more than 5 seconds. If you need more mucus, you can wait 30 seconds and suction again.
- The container has two caps: one with holes and one with no holes. When you have mucus in the container, take off the cap with holes and throw it away. Take the cap without holes off the bottom of the trap, and put it on top of the container. Screw the top on tightly. Be careful not to touch the inside of the cap or the inside of the container because this can change the results from the lab. Take off your gloves and clean your hands.
- Write your child's name, date the mucus was collected, and other information on the label. Put this label on the container.
- Send or take the mucus to the lab right away.
- Within a few days the doctor will get the results of the culture. The doctor will then let you know what the results are and if you need to give your child medicine.

Now that you've read this:

- Show your nurse or doctor how you will collect mucus for a culture.
(Check when done.)

- Tell your nurse or doctor what you can do to keep germs from your hands and tubing from getting on the mucus sample. (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,
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