

Skin Care for Tracheostomies

Skin care should be done three (3) times a day or as often as necessary during the first 14 days after surgery, and then as recommended by your doctor.

1. Wash hands very well with soap and water or hand gel.
2. Gather equipment:
 - Cotton tipped applicators(q-tips) or gauze
 - Mild liquid soap
 - Water
 - Half strength hydrogen peroxide – if needed
 - 2 clean disposable cups
3. Wash hands very well with soap and water or hand gel.
4. Pour water into first cup with small amount of soap.
5. Pour plain water into second cup.
6. Dip cotton tipped applicator or gauze into the soap and water mixture.
7. Roll the cotton tipped applicator or gauze between the tracheostomy tube and the skin around the opening. Clean from the stoma outward. This removes wet or dried mucus.
8. Repeat steps 5 and 6, using fresh cotton tipped applicator or gauze each time, until entire area around the opening is clean.
9. When secretions are "crusty" at the trach site, you may use 1.5% hydrogen peroxide. $\frac{1}{2}$ strength of the 3% hydrogen peroxide may be used (mix 1 part hydrogen peroxide with 1 part water). Then wash with soap and water.
10. Rinse with clear water using new q-tips or gauze.
11. Observe for any unusual drainage or redness that may mean infection. Notify the doctor if you see it. During the bath, be sure to clean the folds of the neck. Never use baby powder because it may get into the trach.
12. You may need to "pad" the neck under trach and trach ties. If skin breakdown occurs, place gauze pads under the trach and/or trach tie. Only use pre-cut split gauze for under the trach tube. Do not cut gauze.