Tracheostomy Care –
Changing the Tracheostomy Tube

The tracheostomy tube is changed routinely for cleaning. Change the tracheostomy tube at least _____ times each week on ____________________. Use only a ______________ size ____________ tracheostomy tube.

1. Wash your hands.

2. Gather supplies and place them where they can be easily reached. The supplies you need are:
   - Clean tracheostomy tube with ties attached, a 2x2 split-gauze or other recommended dressing in place and obturator (guide) inside. (Apply a light coat of water soluble lubricant (like K-Y® Jelly or Lubrifax®) over the outside of the tracheostomy tube, if needed.)
   - Cloth to clean and dry your child’s neck
   - Cotton swabs (i.e., Q-Tips®)
   - Blanket roll to place under the shoulders
   - Blanket to swaddle your baby

3. Remove your child’s clothing from around his neck and shoulders. Position your child on his back with a blanket roll under his shoulders.

4. Swaddle your baby with his hands and arms inside a blanket.

5. Have another person help position your child and hold the tracheostomy tube in place.

6. Release the trach ties from the back Velcro® piece.

7. Remove your child’s tracheostomy tube following the curve of the tube.

8. Insert a clean tube (with obturator in place) into the tracheostomy stoma (opening).

9. Remove the obturator as soon as the tube is in place.

10. Clean and dry your child’s neck with a clean cloth. Clean the skin around the tracheostomy opening with cotton swabs. Make sure you hold the tube in place as you do this.

11. Fasten the ties securely in the back. The ties should be tight enough that only the tip of your little finger can fit between the ties and your child’s neck.

12. Clean the used tracheostomy tube and ties to use again. (See "Tracheostomy Care – Cleaning the Tracheostomy Tube and Ties" CARE CARD.)
Safety Precautions:

- Notify your baby's doctor if your baby has a fever, diarrhea or vomiting.

- Change the tracheostomy tube before your child's mealtime, so his stomach is empty. This will lessen the chance of vomiting. Changing the tracheostomy tube can cause gagging and coughing.

- Always keep 2 spare, clean tracheostomy tubes (one tube of the same size and one a size smaller) at the bed-side or near your child at all times. This is in case an emergency change is needed.

- Do not use any lubricant that is not water soluble.

- Change the tracheostomy tube immediately if you can not get a suction catheter to go through the tube.

- If the tracheostomy tube is difficult to insert:
  - Make sure the tube is inserted in the correct direction.
  - Make sure the obturator is in place.
  - Check your child's position. His neck may need to be a little more or less tilted.
  - If you are not able to insert the same sized tracheostomy tube, use the tube one size smaller. If you need to use a smaller tube, call your child's doctor for assistance in replacing the original sized tube.

Call your child's doctor or the Children’s Mercy Hospital Information Line at (816) 234-3188 if you have questions or concerns regarding your child’s tracheostomy.

If your child is having difficulty breathing, call your emergency number (911) or take him for emergency medical care.

See other "Tracheostomy Care" CARE CARDS for information on tracheostomy care; suctioning the tracheostomy; changing the tracheostomy ties and skin care; cleaning the tracheostomy tube and ties; and CPR.