

## **Laryngectomy Definitions**

### **Artificial airway**

A surgically created opening in the *trachea* that bypasses the normal upper airway system (nose and mouth). Also called "*tracheostomy*" or "*tracheostoma*".

### **Aspiration**

When food, saliva, or other substances enter the trachea instead of the *esophagus*. Can cause coughing and discomfort.

### **Atmospheric**

Of or relating to air (atmosphere).

### **Bacterial**

Of, relating to, or caused by bacteria.

### **Candida**

A yeast-like fungus that can attack an indwelling device such as a voice prosthesis or tracheostomy tube. This fungus can eventually alter or destroy the surfaces of the devices, making them not work properly.

### **Cartilage**

Firm, rubbery connective tissue that cushions bones at joints.

### **Diaphragm**

Muscle in chest used for breathing; separates the abdomen from the chest cavity.

### **Electrolarynx**

An electronic device used to produce a mechanical voice. Placed in the corner of the mouth or against the skin of the neck.

### **Encrustation**

Hard and dried build-up of *mucus*. Must be removed from *tracheostomy* or *laryngectomy tube* to ensure maximum airflow.

### **Epiglottis**

"Trap door". A structure made of cartilage that overhangs the *larynx* like a lid and prevents food, saliva, and liquids from entering the *larynx* and *trachea* while swallowing.

### **Esophageal Speech**

The technique of swallowing air and belching to create speech.

### **Esophagus**

"Food pipe". The food and fluid passageway from the mouth to the stomach. Located behind the *trachea*.

### **Expiration**

Breathing out of air from lungs.

**Fistula**

An opening (either planned or abnormal) between two structures such as the trachea and esophagus.

**Granulation tissue**

Tissue that can grow in or around the *trachea*. Can block lower part of *tracheostomy tube* or creep into *tracheostomy tube fenestrations*. Can usually be treated with medication or removed by doctor.

**HME device**

Heat / Moisture Exchanger. A filter-like device that, when attached to the outside of a *tracheostoma*, will trap heated and moisturized air from the lungs during *expiration*. The heated and moisturized air is then re-delivered to the lungs during *inspiration*.

**Inspiration**

Breathing in of air to lungs.

**Insufflation test**

A test given to a laryngectomee before receiving a *tracheoesophageal puncture* procedure to determine his/her potential ability to speak using a *voice prosthesis*.

**Laryngectomee**

A person who has had his or her *larynx* removed.

**Laryngectomy**

Partial or total surgical removal of the larynx, usually as a treatment for laryngeal cancer.

**Laryngectomy Tube**

A tubular device placed in the *tracheostoma* to provide support.

**Laryngoscope**

A flexible lighted tube used to examine the *larynx*.

**Laryngoscopy**

Examination of the *larynx* with a mirror (indirect laryngoscopy) or with a *laryngoscope* (direct laryngoscopy).

**Larynx**

"Voicebox" or "Adams apple". Located on top of the *trachea*. Contains the *epiglottis* and *vocal cords*.

**Lot number**

Unique number assigned by the manufacturer that identifies your *voice prosthesis* and *tracheostomy tube*.

**Low profile**

Used to describe the outside end of a *tracheostomy tube* or *speaking valve* that is short and close to the neck.

**Lumen**

The inside of the *tracheostomy tube* through which air passes.

**mm**

The abbreviation for millimeter. One millimeter equals .039 inches.

**Mucus**

A thick, sticky fluid made by the mucus membranes and glands of the airway walls. A large buildup of mucous below or in the *tracheostomy tube* can create a "mucus plug" and can partially or completely block the passage of air through the tube.

**Neck dissection**

Surgery to remove cancerous lymph nodes in the neck.

**Neck plate**

The outer part of the *tracheostomy tube* that rests against the neck. Most neck plates have slots through which *trach ties* or *neck straps* can be attached. Usually the catalog number and size of the *tracheostomy tube* is marked on the neck plate.

**Neck straps**

Soft fabric strap attached to *tracheostomy tube neck plate* to help keep tube in place. Some neck straps are adjustable.

**Obturator**

A device that fits inside the *tracheostomy tube* prior to insertion into the *tracheostoma*. When inserted into the tube, the obturator creates a blunt point at the bottom of the tube to make tube insertion easier and more comfortable. The obturator is immediately removed following tube insertion.

**Outer cannula**

The main tube with neck plate that is placed into the *trachea*.

**Patent, Patency**

Open, clear airway

**Speaking valve**

A one-way valve device that permits speaking without the need for the patient to cover the *tracheostomy tube* with his/her finger. The valve will open during *inspiration* to allow air to be inhaled, and close during *expiration* to direct air up through larynx and mouth.

**Stoma**

A hole through the front of the neck into the *trachea*.

**Suctioning**

One method to keep the inside of the *tracheostomy tube* clean and free of mucus. A small catheter connected to a suction machine is placed into the *tracheostomy tube* to remove accumulated *mucous* and other substances.

**Swivel neck plate**

A neck plate that can swivel up and down and/or side to side. Allows for greater range of head and neck movement without discomfort caused by tracheostomy tube pressing against the inside of the trachea.

**Trach**

Shortened version of *tracheostomy*. Rhymes with "lake".

**Trachea**

"Windpipe". The passageway through which air flows between the *larynx* and the lungs.

**Tracheal wall**

The inside lining of the *trachea*.

**Tracheoesophageal Puncture (TEP)**

A surgically created opening between the *trachea* and *esophagus* performed either during the *laryngectomy* procedure or later as a secondary operation. A *voice prosthesis* is placed in the opening to allow speech.

**Tracheostoma**

An opening in the neck. Also called "tracheal stoma" or simply "stoma".

**Tracheostomy Tube**

A tubular device placed into the *tracheostoma*. Also called a *laryngectomy tube*.

**Tracheostomy**

A surgically created opening through the neck into the *trachea*.

**Tracheotomy**

The surgical procedure to create a *tracheostomy*.

**Trach ties**

Fabric, usually cotton twill, used to secure the *tracheostomy tube* in place. Connects to the slots in the *tracheostomy tube neck plate*.

**Voice prosthesis**

A small tubular device placed in the *tracheoesophageal puncture*. The device will have some sort of one-way valve to allow expired air from the lungs to pass up through to the *esophagus*, and will close to prevent food and liquids from entering the *trachea* from the *esophagus*. The device enables laryngectomees to produce speech by creating an airflow to the esophagus, vibrating the esophagus to create sound, and allowing the tongue, teeth, and lips to form speech.