

How to Collect a Tracheostomy Sample

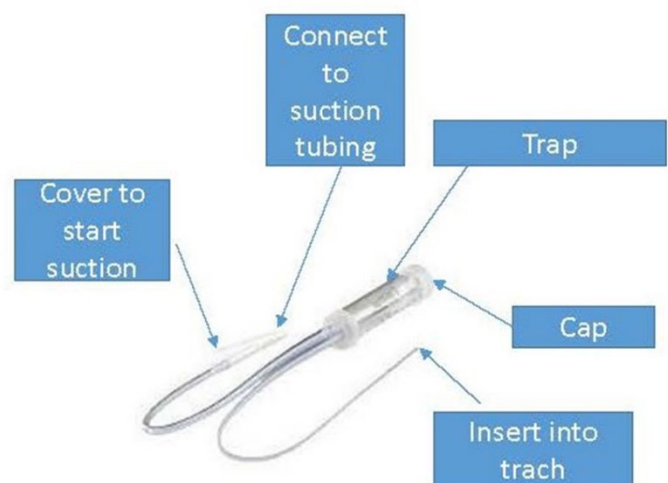
A child with a trach can get airway infections. When this happens you may be asked to get a trach culture. A **trach culture** is a sample of mucus collected from your child's trach that you take to a lab to be tested for bacteria. If the lab finds bacteria, they will notify the medical team who will decide if your child needs an antibiotic to treat the infection. It is best to get the mucus tested before your child starts antibiotics.

What do I need?

- Suction machine
- Delee suction catheter (see below)
- Saline drops
- Gloves
- Soap or hand sanitizer

How do I collect a sample?

1. Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer.
2. Turn on the suction machine
3. Connect the suction tubing to the suction catheter with a trap. (Delee catheter)
4. Cover the hole on the Delee suction catheter to start suction.
5. Suction to the recommended depth. No deeper than 0.5cm beyond the end of the trach tube.



- If you are unable to get much mucous then try inserting 3- 5 drops of saline into the trach and bagging in breaths or placing on the vent for 3-5 breaths. Then suction again.
- The mucus will collect in the trap of the Delee suction catheter. You do not need a lot of mucus.

Once you have a sample:

1. Pry off the top of the trap. The bottom of the trap has a white cap that can be removed.
2. Remove the cap and place on top of the trap to seal it.
3. Take the sample to the lab:
 - The lab must have an order from a doctor in order to test the mucus.

It can take 3-4 days for the lab to find out what type of bacteria are in the mucus and to determine what type of medicine is the best treatment.

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