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800-719-4040 (toll-free)
651-299-3928 (TDD)
www.gillettechildrens.org

Contact Us

Urgent Questions or Concerns

Telehealth Nursing
651-229-3890

Other Questions About Your Care

St. Paul Clinic patients:
Nurse Call Line
651-578-5000

Patients at Other Locations:
Contact a member of your
Gillette health care team.

Appointments
651-290-8707

Books, DVDs and More

Find materials about
disabilities, medical conditions
and support for caregivers.

Health Resources and Education

St. Paul campus, near
fourth-floor skyway
651-229-3938
hre@gillettechildrens.com

Suctioning

patient education
DIS056

What is suctioning?

Suctioning consists of inserting a small catheter (connected to negative pressure) into the nose, mouth or tracheostomy tube to remove secretions.

Why is suctioning needed for my child?

Suction is needed when a child has secretions that he/she is unable to remove by coughing.

How will I know my child needs suctioning?

- The "gurgly" sound of secretions
- Your child is having trouble breathing
- Your child's color looks grey or blue (around eyes, mouth, fingernails or toenails).

How do I suction?

1. Wash your hands.
2. Gather equipment:
 - Water soluble lubricant
 - Suction catheter kit
 - Suction machine
 - Sterile water
3. Turn on suction machine.
4. Open suction catheter kit. Everything inside the kit is sterile (free from germs). Keep everything inside the kit sterile as you open it.
 - Remove sterile gloves package from kit and place on clean surface.
 - Put some sterile water in the suction catheter kit base.
5. Put on the sterile gloves (one hand will stay sterile, the other won't).
6. Pick up the suction catheter with your sterile hand.
7. With the other hand, pick up connecting tubing from the suction machine and attach it to the suction catheter.

8. For nasal suction, apply a water-soluble lubricant (such as KY Jelly) to the end of the suction catheter.
9. Pass catheter into airway until child coughs.
10. Apply intermittent suction (no longer than seven seconds).
 - Rotate catheter between thumb and forefinger while withdrawing the catheter.
11. For oral suction, follow above steps except insert catheter into throat through the mouth. For tracheostomy tube suction, follow above steps except insert the catheter into the tracheostomy tube. The catheter should only be inserted just past the bottom end of the tracheostomy tube.
12. Allow child to rest (15-20 seconds).
13. Rinse the catheter by suctioning sterile water from the suction catheter kit base.
14. Repeat suction if needed.
15. Discard catheter and gloves.
16. Turn off suction pump.
17. Wash your hands.

When should I call Telehealth Nursing (651-229-3890)?

- Your child has a hard time breathing even after suctioning
- Increased secretions
- Secretion changes color
- Fever
- Lip or nail color becomes darker