



Emergency Management of the laryngectomy patient with breathing difficulties

Call for airway expert help (Anaesthetics / Critical Care / ENT)

Look, listen & feel at the mouth and laryngectomy stoma

A Mapleson C system ("Waters circuit") may help assessment if available

Use **waveform capnography** whenever available: exhaled carbon dioxide indicates a patent or partially patent airway

No

Is the patient breathing?

Yes

Call Resuscitation Team
CPR if no pulse / signs of life

Apply high flow oxygen to laryngectomy stoma
(use tracheostomy mask or paediatric face mask)
If any doubt whether patient has a laryngectomy, **apply oxygen to face** also*

Assess laryngectomy stoma patency

Most laryngectomy stomas will NOT have a tube in situ

Remove **stoma cover** (if present)
Remove **inner tube** (if present)

Some inner tubes need re-inserting to connect to breathing circuits
Do not remove a tracheoesophageal puncture (TEP) prosthesis

Can you pass a suction catheter?

Yes

The laryngectomy stoma is patent
Perform tracheal suction
Consider partial obstruction
Ventilate via stoma if not breathing
Continue ABCDE assessment

No

Deflate the **cuff** (if present)

Look, listen & feel at the laryngectomy stoma or tube
Use waveform capnography or Mapleson C if available

Is the patient stable or improving?

Yes

Continue ABCDE assessment

No

REMOVE THE TUBE FROM THE LARYNGECTOMY STOMA if present

Look, listen & feel at the laryngectomy stoma. Ensure oxygen is re-applied to stoma
Use waveform capnography or Mapleson C if available

No

Call Resuscitation Team
CPR if no pulse / signs of life

Is the patient breathing?

Yes

Continue ABCDE assessment

Primary emergency oxygenation

Laryngectomy stoma ventilation via either
Paediatric face mask applied to stoma
LMA applied to stoma

Secondary emergency oxygenation

Attempt **intubation of laryngectomy stoma**
Small tracheostomy tube / 6.0 cuffed ETT
Consider Aintree catheter and fiberoptic scope / Bougie / Airway exchange catheter

* Laryngectomy patients have an end stoma and **cannot be oxygenated via the mouth or nose**
Applying oxygen to the face and stoma is the default emergency action for all patients with a tracheostomy