Emergency tracheostomy management - patent upper airway

Call for airway expert help or rapid response team or code blue
Look, listen and feel at mouth and tracheostomy
A manual breathing system with a flow-inflating bag may help assessment (if available)
Use **waveform capnography** when available: exhaled carbon dioxide indicates a patent or partially patent airway

Is the patient breathing?

NO

Call rapid response team or code blue
CPR if unresponsive AND absent or abnormal breathing
Apply high flow oxygen to **BOTH** face and tracheostomy

YES

Apply high flow oxygen
to **BOTH** face and tracheostomy

Assess tracheostomy patency

Remove **speaking valve** or cap (if present)
Remove **inner cannula**
Some inner cannulas need re-inserting to connect to breathing circuits

Can you pass a suction catheter?

YES

Tracheostomy tube is patent
Perform tracheal suction
Consider partial obstruction
Ventilate (via tracheostomy) if not breathing
Continue ABCDE assessment

NO

Deflate the **cuff** (if present)
Look, listen and feel at mouth and tracheostomy
Use waveform capnography or manual breathing system

Is the patient stable or improving?

YES

Tracheostomy tube partially obstructed or displaced
Continue ABCDE assessment

NO

REMOVE THE TRACHEOSTOMY TUBE
Look, listen and feel at mouth and tracheostomy. Ensure oxygen re-applied to face and stoma
Use waveform capnography or manual breathing system with flow-inflating bag

Is the patient breathing?

NO

Call rapid response team or code blue
CPR if unresponsive AND absent or abnormal breathing

YES

Continue ABCDE assessment

Primary emergency oxygenation

Standard **ORAL airway** manoeuvre
Cover the stoma (swabs and/or hand). Use:
- bag and mask
- oral or nasal airway adjuncts
- supraglottic airway device e.g. LMA

Tracheostomy STOMA ventilation either
Paediatric face mask applied to stoma OR
LMA applied to stoma

Secondary emergency oxygenation

Attempt **ORAL intubation**
Prepare for difficult intubation
Uncut tube, advanced beyond stoma

Attempt **intubation** of **STOMA**
Small tracheostomy tube, 6.0 cuffed ETT
Consider bougie, airway exchange catheter
or flexible bronchoscope +/- aintree catheter

NSW GOVERNMENT
AGENCY FOR CLINICAL INNOVATION

Intensive care NSW
Based on UK National Tracheostomy Safety Project.
www.tracheostomy.org.uk

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