

Signs your child needs suctioning

- If your child is pooling secretions at the back of their throat, which is unable to be cleared by effective coughing, and it is interfering with their breathing pattern, causing increased respiratory distress.
- Lots of drooling and clear discomfort that is not helped by carefully wiping your child's mouth.
- Skin color may become blue or pale.
- Agitation, distress, gurgling noises,
- Problems breathing, with or without trying to cough or gag to clear the airway.

Equipment

- Suction catheter and tubing
- Water (to rinse catheter)
- Suction unit
- Gloves

Procedure**1. Before Suctioning:**

- Turn on the suction unit and check the pressure gauge by blocking the end of the suction tubing with your finger.
- It should read between 80-100 mmHg. Some portable models may require a higher pressure – 150 mmHg due to the length of connecting tubing.
- If your child uses oxygen via nasal prongs, this should be kept on during suctioning.

2. Position your child on their side preferably with head slightly extended, or if in a chair, extend neck slightly. A baby may need to be swaddled in a blanket.**3. Shallow Suctioning:**

- Suction around and in the mouth
- Gently insert the catheter into your child's mouth keeping toward the inside of the cheeks.
- Do not go beyond the inside of the cheeks or molars.

4. Suctioning the nose:

- Avoid suctioning the nose if possible
- Gently wipe secretions or milk away first
- Suctioning the nose can irritate and cause more secretions
- Gently insert catheter into nose to correct length (measure length of catheter to be inserted, by measuring from nose to ear). Do NOT force catheter against any resistance – rotate gently until it passes or withdraw and start again.

5. To suction

- Do not block the control valve until you start to with-draw the catheter.
- At the same time gently roll the catheter between your thumb and finger.
- You may need to repeat to make sure all the secretions are cleared.
- Length of time from insertion of catheter to being withdrawn should be less than 10 seconds.
- When you have finished suctioning, flush the catheter and tubing with water.

If you have any questions, please call Canuck Place: 604-742-3475

If you have any feedback to help us improve this document, please email
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References

BC Children's Hospital. (2014). Home Suctioning.
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