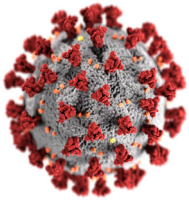


# Guidance on Home Medical Supplies



**SPECIALIZED CARE  
FOR CHILDREN**



## Home medical supply cleaning

Adequate quantities of home medical supplies are essential to safely care for technology-dependent children at home during the COVID-19 crisis. Families should consider cleaning and re-using supplies when safely possible in case there's a future shortage of critical items. These guidelines explain what items may be cleaned and re-used and how. Families should check with their care team that these guidelines are appropriate for their children. Under normal circumstances when there are no supply shortages, families should follow the guidelines provided by their medical team and equipment supplier.

### Enteral feeding supplies

**Specialty formula:** It may be possible to order formula online if durable medical equipment (DME) companies cannot supply it. Online retailers may be willing to bill commercial insurance. If you cannot get the prescribed formula, please check with your child's medical team to identify safe substitutes.

**Enteral feeding tubes:** Balloon-type tubes are typically changed every three months. If the tube is functioning correctly, you may safely use it for up to six months or longer. Alternatively, you can remove and clean the tube after three months and then store it for possible re-use in the event of a shortage. Clean the tube with hot, soapy water, rinse it well, dry it on a paper towel, and then store it in a clean zip-lock bag.

**Enteral feeding bags:** Typically, these bags are used for 24 hours, then discarded. They may be cleaned after each use and stored in the refrigerator until the next use. They may be used for up to a week if they still function properly. Suggestions are to flush the bag and tubing thoroughly with water and then store in a zip-lock bag in the refrigerator. You may also rinse and flush with a quarter-strength vinegar solution, followed by water, and then store in the refrigerator. If you use soap and water, rinse the bag thoroughly before storing and re-using. Use dish soap.

**Extension tubing:** Typically used for two weeks. You should flush well after each feeding and store in a zip-lock bag in the refrigerator between feeds. You may also flush the tubing with a quarter-strength vinegar and water solution, followed by water, and then store it in a zip-lock bag in the refrigerator. You can use the tubing for up to a month if it is functional.

### Suction supplies:

**Suction canisters:** Typically replaced monthly. You can clean and re-use indefinitely as long as the canister is intact. Clean with hot, soapy water or a quarter-strength vinegar and water solution and rinse well.

**Suction tubing:** Typically changed monthly. You can clean the tubing with hot, soapy water or a quarter-strength vinegar and water solution and use it indefinitely as long as it is intact.

Suction machine filters should be replaced monthly and cannot be cleaned and re-used.

**Suction catheters:** Can be reused in the home setting. The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) will typically approve 120 catheters per month. If a shortage occurs, you can use one catheter for an entire day by suctioning water through until it is clear after each use and making sure it remains unobstructed. You may soak it in a quarter-strength vinegar and water solution, then allow it to air dry. You may re-use it as long as the catheter remains patent.

**Inline suction catheters:** May consider changing every other day

### Tracheostomy supplies:

**HME:** Cannot be cleaned and re-used. If the child is home, he or she can use a humidified trach collar.

**Silicone (such as Bivona) Trach tubes:** Change every two weeks.

To clean:

- Wash the silicone in warm, soapy water (use a non-oil-based dish soap) and use a soft brush such as a clean toothbrush.
- Heat water and remove from heat when it starts to boil.
- Place trach tube and obturator in pan and let cool.
- Remove and dry on a paper towel.
- Once dried, store in clean zip-lock bag.

- You may also clean the tube thoroughly with soap and water, dry and store, then place in just-boiled water prior to placing the tube.
- You may also soak it in a quarter-strength vinegar and water solution for one hour then allow it to air dry on a clean paper towel. You should then place it in a clean zip-lock bag.

Silicone trach tubes can be cleaned and re-used up to five times, so you will need to track the use. You can note the number of cleanings on the zip-lock storage bag.

**Plastic Trach/medical grade/PVC tube (such as Shiley):** Change every two weeks. Wash with mild soap and water (use a non-oil-based dish soap) and use a soft brush, such as a clean/new toothbrush or pipe cleaner, to clean. Push the obturator through to clear secretions. Rinse in distilled water. Place in a half-strength solution of hydrogen peroxide and distilled water for one to two minutes. Rinse in distilled water and place on a clean paper towel to dry. Once completely dry, store in a clean zip-lock bag and label with the number of times used.

**Tracoe tubes:** Can be changed once a month. Can be cleaned using the same procedure as Bivonas.

**Trach ties:** You can try laundering in hot water.

Older children and adults may be able to undergo trach tube changes once a month, or if an inner cannula is used, possibly less often.

### **Ventilator:**

**Vent circuit:** Must be replaced monthly. Cannot be cleaned.

**Corrugated tubing:** Can be cleaned and re-used. Clean in a quarter-strength vinegar and water solution.

**Humidity bag:** Can be cleaned and re-used. Clean with a quarter-strength vinegar and water.

**Humidichambers:** Can be cleaned and re-used

### **Nebulizer equipment:**

Can clean and re-use tubing and med cup with a quarter-strength vinegar and water solution

**The CDC recommends using a bandana or other face covering if a face mask is unavailable.**

### **Home disinfection products:**

Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work. Use disinfectants appropriate for the surface.

Options include:

- **Diluting your household bleach.**

To make a bleach solution, mix:

- 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water

OR

- 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.

- **Alcohol solutions.**

Ensure solution has at least 70 percent alcohol.

- **Other common EPA-registered household disinfectants.**

Products with [EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens](#) claims are expected to be effective against COVID-19 based on data for harder-to-kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).

**Hand sanitizer:** Between washing hands, or if a sink is not readily available, you may use hand sanitizer. You can make hand sanitizer by mixing 2/3 cup of rubbing alcohol with 1/2 cup aloe vera in a clean container (a ratio of 2:1). You may add a few drops of essential oil if desired. Label and keep out of reach of children.

### **Sources:**

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 Children's Hospital of Wisconsin (Cleaning a Shiley Trach Tube)  
 Shield Healthcare, Aimee Jarenowicz, RD) (formula supply)  
 IDPH Medically Fragile Child Guideline- making hand sanitizer

Lurie Children's Hospital Vent team (trach tubes, vent circuits, inline suction catheters)  
<https://www.pediatrichomeservice.com/blog/kangaroo-joe-epump-feeding-bag/>  
 (using feeding bags for longer)  
 OSF Trach/vent team (Joe Witherspoon, RT) Trach tube cleaning <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/face-masks.html> (improvising face masks)