

Tracheal Stenosis

Tracheal stenosis means narrowing of your windpipe, also called your trachea. The narrowing is often caused by irritation and scarring to the lining of the windpipe. This can happen if you have had a breathing tube in place to help you breathe. It can also result from cancer, injury to the windpipe, chronic inflammatory diseases, collagen vascular disease or lung transplantation.

Signs of this problem may include:

- Problems breathing when you are active
- Wheezing
- High pitched noise from throat with breathing
- Frequent upper respiratory infections

Tests

Your doctor may want you to have tests to help determine the treatment you may need. Tests may include:

- CT scan to find the location and amount of narrowing
- Bronchoscopy to look inside your windpipe
 - ▶ If you have this test, you may be given medicine that will make you sleepy. You will need to have someone with you for the next 24 hours to watch for any breathing problems.
 - ▶ You may be kept in the hospital for 23 hours after this test to check you for any airway swelling. A steroid medicine is often given during the test to control the swelling. Other doses may be given.

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Learn more about your health care.

- ▶ Know that you may cough up black tissue after this test. This is tissue that was burned or frozen off during the test.

You may need to see a lung doctor called an interventional pulmonologist for treatment. This problem is not cured after one treatment but may require treatment over several months to ease the problem.

Treatment

There are different ways to treat this problem. Your lung doctor will talk with you about the options that may be best for you. Treatment may include:

- Airway stents – Small tubes are placed in the airways to hold the airways open.
 - Argon plasma coagulation (ACP) – Argon is used to apply heat to the scar or tumor tissue to open the narrowing.
 - Balloon dilation – A balloon is used with a bronchoscope to open the narrowing. The balloon is placed in the area that is narrow and then inflated to push the tissue back to open the airway more.
 - Tracheal surgery – Surgery is done to remove the narrowed section of the windpipe and then the two ends are connected back together.
 - Brachytherapy – If the narrowing is from a certain type of tumor, radioactive seeds may be placed into the windpipe for a short time to kill the cells.
 - Cryotherapy – A bronchoscope is used to apply a probe to freeze the tissue of a tumor to kill it off.
 - Electrocautery – Electrical current is used to apply heat to the tissue to be removed.
 - Laser therapy – A laser is used to burn off the tissue or tumor that is causing the narrowing.
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- **Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.**