



A healthy person clears his or her throat or coughs almost without any conscious thought. The suction machine or aspirator provides assistance for those who have difficulty clearing their throat, swallowing and coughing. By clearing the mouth and airway of fluid and mucus, the suction machine enables the person to breathe easier, as well as to eat, drink and talk more comfortably.

A patient may need suctioning by any of the following methods:

Oral Suctioning	(suctioning through the mouth)
Nasal Suctioning	(suctioning through the nose)
Tracheal Suctioning	(suctioning through a tracheostomy tube or laryngectomy stoma)

Additional guidelines will be provided for the specific suctioning method prescribed by your doctor.

It is important that you use only the methods and techniques prescribed by your doctor or recommended by your nurse or therapist. Follow his/her instructions exactly.

The doctor may want the patient suctioned whenever he or she has trouble — breathing, swallowing saliva or coughing up mucus. A build-up of these secretions is usually indicated by raspy breathing or a gurgling sound. The doctor may choose to prevent this by prescribing suctioning at specific intervals. If the patient requires more frequent suctioning to breathe more easily, notify the doctor. Too frequent suctioning can be harmful.

To suction a patient you will need:

A suction machine	(with a collection bottle with lid and tubing)
A suction catheter	(with a control valve)
A container of water	(the doctor may specify sterile water)
Disposable gloves	

SUCTION MACHINE CLEANING PROCEDURE

The collection bottle should be emptied when it becomes half full. At least once a day the collection bottle, lid and tubing should be cleaned and disinfected using the following procedure:

1. Empty the collection bottle contents into the toilet. Rinse the collection bottle thoroughly, empty all rinse water into the toilet and flush. Pour 1/4 cup of bleach into the bottle and fill to the brim with water. Allow to stand for 30 minutes. Empty and rinse thoroughly.

2. Wash the lid and tubing in warm soapy water. In a small container, soak these parts for 30 to 40 minutes in a solution of one cup of white vinegar and three cups of water. If this does not provide enough solution to completely cover the parts, double the mixture.
3. With the suction machine unplugged from the electrical outlet, the outside surface of the machine may be cleaned by wiping with a soft cloth dampened with water.
4. When reassembling the machine, place the lid back on the bottle securely. Make sure all tubing connections are tight. A loose connection anywhere in the system will greatly reduce the suction.

IMPORTANT: The Suction Machine is equipped with a mechanical float-type shut-off valve which will stop the suction if the collection bottle is allowed to over-fill. The motor will continue to run, but there will be no suction. If this happens, turn the unit OFF immediately and empty and clean the collection bottle as previously described. ***If any fluid ever gets past the shut-off valve into the tubing between the bottle and the motor, turn the machine OFF immediately and call our office for servicing.***

TIPS ON SUCTIONING:

Before suctioning, encourage the patient to breathe deeply several times. This will increase the supply of oxygen and help the patient relax, which will make suctioning easier. Deep breathing may also stimulate coughing up secretions and make suctioning more effective.

During the suctioning procedure, do not appear rushed. The patient will be more relaxed if you appear confident and perform the procedure gently but decisively. However, do not prolong the procedure unnecessarily.

If you have difficulty clearing secretions from the patient's airway by suctioning, or if you notice a change in the color, consistency, odor, or volume of secretions while suctioning, you should notify the doctor.

For some methods of suctioning, your doctor may order a specific negative pressure or level of suction. The desired negative pressure can only be adjusted by sealing or closing off the suction tubing and observing the pressure gauge while adjusting the vacuum control knob. The gauge will **not** read unless the tubing is sealed. Adjust the knob slowly and allow time for the gauge to stabilize.