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What is Transtracheal Oxygen Therapy (TTOT)?

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Transtracheal oxygen therapy is one of the many procedures performed in Interventional Pulmonology. It is a method of delivering oxygen directly into the lungs by means of a small, flexible catheter which passes from the lower neck into the trachea.

For many individuals transtracheal oxygen is a more efficient method of getting oxygen into the blood than nasal prongs. Oxygen is their lifeline. Typically these patients are chronically on high flow oxygen. These patients are extremely dependent on their oxygen supply and often panic easily when there is a problem with its delivery. It is very important for the nurse to teach and reassure them throughout the process.

Some of the benefits of Transtracheal Oxygen Therapy are improved comfort, convenience, lower oxygen requirements, increased mobility, and improved appearance.

The transtracheal program extends over a period of about eight weeks. The first phase includes patient instructions



about TTOT and the care of the Transtracheal catheter. After the catheter is placed, the patient comes in weekly to have the catheter exchanged over a wire until the tract is mature. All the while, we are reinforcing their teaching to care for the catheter and to be self-sufficient at the end of the program. At graduation time, I have them do their first catheter exchange at home in the morning. I have my patients call me after they have done the exchange for questions and just to cheer them on their success.

With transtracheal oxygen, patients feel more natural without their “plastic mustache” announcing their illness. The TTOT can give them a new lease on life.



Deborah Rice RN, CNIII Has 29 years experience with the last 13 years at UCSD Interventional Pulmonology.

