

## **Elist Discussion on Tracheotomy Advice**

### **10-24-12 from Kandra:**

I am considering taking on a new client. He is 9 years old and has hunter syndrome. Last year he had a tracheotomy ("trach"). I have not worked with a trach client before but have experience with many "g tubes" (gastrointestinal tubes). What are some procedural safeguards and safety precautions that I need to put in place in order to have him in the water? Where can I find resources regarding trach and aquatic therapy benefits? Thank you very much for your help.

### **10-25 from Lyn:**

I remember having a young boy with a tracheotomy that his mother brought a plug for. He would swim under water and then lift his face toward the surface so we would know when to assist him to the surface for a breath! This was back in the 1980s.

### **10-26 from Tiffany:**

My advice is to not take on patients with trachs. The risk outweighs the benefit. Even when a trach is plugged it can leak. I know this because I used to have a trach that was plugged all the time and even in the shower sometimes it would leak through and I would choke. A person who aspirates pool water through a trach can develop pneumonia or a chemical pneumonia. If the person accidentally inhales water they may also become a victim of dry drowning.

### **From Patricia:**

I haven't heard the term "Dry Drowning" in a long time, yet I often mention it to my Water Safety Instructor candidates as something to watch out for in swim lessons, especially when teaching young children. Can someone give me a better definition than what I have been using? Here is my definition:

“If a student swallows too much water, he should be watched and if the child continues coughing at home to get him to the ER (Emergency Room) because he can suffer from "Dry Drowning" (in other words he passes out and dies).”

I am not sure if that is the correct definition of Dry Drowning. Thanks for your help.