

# Tracheostomy Tube Selection in Critical Care

**Aim:** To provide a standardised approach to the selection of tracheostomy tubes in Critical Care

**Scope:** Adult Critical Care patients requiring tracheostomy, either inserted on the ICU (percutaneous) or in theatre by ENT (surgical)

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## Insertion (*insertion kits*)

### Small body size

(e.g. petite elderly female)

Tracoe Twist Plus subglottic aspiration

Size 7

### Default

Tracoe Twist Plus  
subglottic aspiration

Size 8 or 9

### Large body size

Uniperc adjustable flange

Size 7 or 8

## Subsequent changes on ICU

### Small body size

(e.g. petite elderly female)

Tracoe Twist Plus subglottic aspiration

Size 7

### Default

Tracoe Twist Plus  
subglottic aspiration

Size 8 or 9

### Large body size

Uniperc adjustable flange

Size 7 or 8

## Discharge to the ward

**Note: NO SUBGLOTTIC ASPIRATION TUBES TO BE SENT TO THE WARD**

### Small body size

(e.g. petite elderly female)

Tracoe Twist Standard

Size 6

Or Tracoe Twist Plus Size 7

### Default

Tracoe Twist Plus

Non subglottic  
aspiration

Size 6, 7 or 8

### Large body size

Uniperc adjustable flange

Size 7 or 8

CONSIDER WHETHER  
ADJUSTABLE FLANGE STILL  
NEEDED

## Explanatory notes

### Insertion of tracheostomy

- Most tracheostomies will be inserted percutaneously on the ICU, and for most individuals the **Tracoe Twist Plus** kit will be used.
  - The unit stocks size 7, 8 and 9 insertion kits. The Twist ‘Plus’ is slightly longer than the standard, and this may lead to a slightly better lie within the patients airway.
  - They all have an inner tube and cannot be connected to the ventilator/bag without the inner tube being in place, this is an important safety feature.
  - All tubes have a subglottic aspiration port.
- Exceptions to the use of a Tracoe Twist Plus:
  - Very large patients/thick neck. In these patients an adjustable flange tube may be needed. The unit stocks **Uniperc adjustable flanged tubes** in sizes 7 and 8. These tubes DO NOT have a subglottic aspiration port. These tubes have a wider external diameter than Tracoe tubes (see below) hence the apparent smaller choice of tube.

### Change of tracheostomy ON THE ICU

- For patients staying on the ICU the tracheostomy tube should have a subglottic aspiration port unless there is a clinical decision to change to one without or the patient has an adjustable flange tube (e.g. soon to go to the ward)
- Generally the tube is changed like-for-like however this is an opportunity to reassess the tracheostomy size and type

### Change of tracheostomy for patients DUE TO LEAVE THE ICU

- No patient should leave the ICU with a tube that has a subglottic aspiration post unless there is a very specific clinical reason that is documented in the notes and communicated to the Tracheostomy Support Team/Outreach. This is for safety reasons.
- When the tracheostomy is changed prior to ward discharge a clinical decision can be made whether to down size the tube or keep the same size.
- For standard individuals there is a choice of **Tracoe Twist Plus size 6, 7 or 8.**
- For petite individuals there is a choice of **Tracoe Twist Plus size 7 or Tracoe Twist Standard size 6.**
- For large individuals there is **Uniperc adjustable flange size 7 or 8**, however it should be considered whether another type of tracheostomy can now be used.

### Comparison of inner diameter (ID) and outer diameter (OD between types of tube

ID (mm) Size as labelled	OD (mm)		
	Tracoe Twist Plus	Tracoe Twist Standard	Uniperc
7	9.8	10.4	11.6
8	10.8	11.4	12.6
9	11.8	12.5	13.6