

Non-Directed Bronchial Lavage (NBL) in Critical Care

Aim To provide guidance on correct NBL technique for endotracheal or tracheostomy tubes.

Scope All adult patients in Critical Care with endotracheal (ETT) or tracheostomy tubes. This SOP should be used in conjunction with the Ventilator Care Bundle and Endotracheal Tube and Tracheostomy Tube SOPs.

Critical Care patient with ETT or tracheostomy

Prepare Equipment

1. Pre-oxygenate (100% O₂ for 3 mins)
2. Fill syringe with 20ml 0.9% saline
3. Attach syringe to suction catheter
4. Check suction is set to -20mmHg
5. Attach sputum trap to suction tubing
6. Prepare sterile glove & put on PPE

Disconnect Inline Suction

- If present, remove inline suction catheter and cover with blue cover (supplied in pack)

Flush With Saline

- With hand in sterile glove, pass suction catheter down ETT or tracheostomy tube until resistance is felt (the carina), then withdraw by 1cm
- Flush 20ml sterile 0.9% saline down suction catheter

**Flush saline down the suction catheter, not directly down the ETT / tracheostomy.
This is essential to prevent cross-contamination.**

Collect Samples

- Quickly detach the syringe and attach the sputum trap and suction catheter
- The sample should be collected in the sputum trap
- Remove the sputum trap and reattach the tubing to the suction catheter
- Withdraw the suction catheter slowly whilst applying suction
- Repeat a second suction to ensure all saline is removed