OSCE checklist for tracheostomy care

An OSCE checklist for tracheostomy care starts with checking the emergency equipment is at the bedside, then covers inner tube care, stoma cleaning, humidification, suction if needed and recording. Safety checks come first.

OSCE checklist for tracheostomy care: steps to practise

1. Check the bedside emergency equipment: spare tubes, suction, oxygen source, and the tracheostomy information sheet.
2. Wash or rub your hands. Gather clean equipment and the protective wear your policy needs.
3. Introduce yourself, confirm identity, explain and gain consent. Agree a signal for distress.
4. Position the patient comfortably, with good access to the neck.
5. Check the tube type, whether it is cuffed, and that the ties or holder are secure and not too tight.
6. Remove, check and clean or replace the inner tube according to your policy, and keep the patient breathing safely.
7. Clean the stoma and the skin around it. Check for redness, discharge or damage.
8. Change the dressing or holder as needed, keeping it clean and dry.
9. Check humidification is working, and suction only if needed.
10. Check and record cuff pressure if the tube is cuffed.
11. Document the care, the secretions and the patient's breathing and comfort.

What candidates commonly forget

- Emergency equipment at the bedside.
- Knowing the tube type and whether it is cuffed.
- Keeping the airway clear while the inner tube is out.
- Ties that are too tight or loose.
- A way for the patient to communicate.

Local policy comes first

This is our own practice checklist. Your college, hospital or country may do some steps differently. Where local policy and this list disagree, follow local policy. Cleaning solutions, inner tube policy and cuff rules vary by hospital and patient. Use your local policy and the patient's care plan. You can practise with an AI patient, and try one station free with no sign-up. See also the general OSCE nursing checklist.

Common questions

What equipment should be at the bedside?

Spare tubes, suction, oxygen and an emergency information sheet, as your policy lists.

How often should the inner tube be cleaned?

As the policy and the patient's secretions require. Say what you would check first.

What if the patient cannot breathe?

Call for help, check and clear the airway, and follow your emergency tracheostomy algorithm.

Sources

- National Tracheostomy Safety Project
- NHS: Tracheostomy

Checked 2026-11-13. Fees and rules change, so confirm them with the regulator before you book.