



The Myth of Decannulation

Tracheostomy Decannulation is the process of the removal of the tracheostomy tube from the stoma or opening in the trachea.

The Act of Decannulation can be intentional (on purpose) or unintentional (accidental).

Intentional Decannulation, for example, occurs on a periodic basis when the facility replaces the tracheostomy tube for their long-term patients. The well defined stoma makes it easy for the clinician to insert the new tracheostomy tube without significant difficulty.

Unintentional Decannulation can occur under a variety of circumstances such as:

- 1) When an unrestrained distraught patient pulls out their tracheostomy tube.
 - 2) When moving the patient, if the ventilator circuit becomes taut I can pull out the tracheostomy tube.
- In any of these situations, Decannulation results in a ventilator alarm event which notifies the clinical staff. The clinical staff can easily re-insert the tracheostomy tube into the well defined stoma.

Lazarus Medical has been asked whether there is an increased possibility of Decannulation when utilizing the Phoneris Product Solution. In a nutshell, the answer is no based on the clinical utilization of the Phoneris Product Solution to date. Typically the Phoneris Aero-Flex will break apart under approximately 5 lbs of force, so Decannulation is prevented, but of course, Disconnection will have occurred.

The more important question is whether the incidence of Decannulation is the less than, greater than, or the same as the incidence of Disconnection. In a national survey of Respiratory Therapists, we discovered that there are approximately 200 incidences of Disconnection for every one incidence of Decannulation. The impact on the patients and clinicians of Decannulation or Disconnection are basically the same, **but** Disconnection has a far greater clinical impact due to the larger number of Disconnection incidences that typically occur.

In our current environment, **Pay for Performance** demands that we make every effort to reduce the possibility of VAP as a reduction in the possibility of a Disconnection incidence will reduce the possibility of VAP.