



Reducing Severity of Percutaneous Tracheostomy Complications

Johns Hopkins otolaryngologists have led efforts to standardize the protocol for performing percutaneous dilatational tracheostomy (PDT) on ICU patients. The protocol has reduced complications by 50 percent; now, all tracheostomy procedures for inpatients are performed following this protocol.

The PDT is arranged directly between the intensive care team and the surgeon, leading to a highly efficient “tracheostomy team.”

“We initiated protocols that eliminated scheduling difficulties for inpatients and standardized criteria for candidates as well as the actual way we perform the procedure,” says Nasir Bhatti, assistant professor of otolaryngology–head & neck surgery. “In addition, we developed a comprehensive postoperative care model involving the entire multidisciplinary team. The complication rate drops significantly with experience.”

“We’ve established this procedure and are now seeing the result—optimal outcomes.”