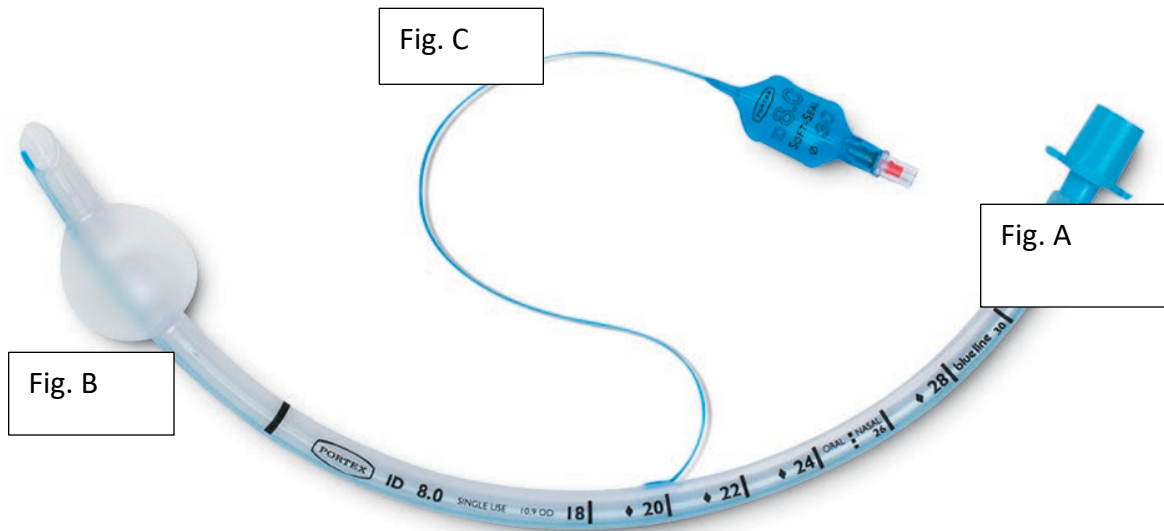


Tube / IV Removal



The picture above is a cuffed endotracheal tube. You may see decedents coming into your care from a medical facility with these tubes still in place in their pharynx. When inserted, the only part of the tube that will be visible will be the portion illustrated in Fig. A. Questions have been raised about the safe removal of these and other upper airway adjuncts amidst the current COVID-19 pandemic. My name is Josh Denning and I have been trained as an advanced care paramedic in Ontario and have intubated and extubated many patients with these tubes. I have been asked to provide some information on the tubes and how to safely remove them.

Endotracheal tubes are inserted by medical professionals to protect the airway of a patient. The tube is inserted with the assistance of a laryngoscope and placed between the vocal cords, then pushed down into the trachea. The inflated cuff you can see in Fig. B is then inflated to provide a seal for both air and other fluids. This cuff unless deflated can make it difficult to remove the endotracheal tube, and could also increase the chance of splashing fluids on the care provider. It is essential to wear the appropriate PPE while performing the following actions. In order to safely remove the endotracheal tube a pair of scissors should be used to cut the tube in Fig C. Once this tube has been cut there will no longer be any air pressure to keep the cuff inflated. The tube can then be safely and easily removed by the provider and disposed of safely. There should be little or no resistance.

Tube / IV Removal



IV removal is another topic that has been raised. An IV is a small plastic catheter that has been inserted to sit within a vein. When initially being placed a metal needle is used to facilitate insertions, however once the IV has been inserted the metal needle is removed leaving only the plastic catheter (Fig. D). Generally, tape and other securing agents are used to keep the IV in place. In order to remove the IV catheter, simply remove the tape and other securing agents and slide the catheter out in the direction it had been inserted from and then safely disposed of it. Please note that there are many different types of IV catheters and these instructions are generalizations.

Josh Denning
ACP, PCP, AEMCA, BAppBus:ES