**Tracheo-Oesophageal Fistula**

**Summary:**

This is a birth defect where there is a connection between the lower part of the oesophagus and the windpipe (trachea). This causes air to pass from the windpipe to the oesophagus and stomach, and stomach acid to pass into the lungs. These defects mean the baby won't be able to swallow safely, if at all. They could also develop life-threatening problems such as choking and pneumonia if not treated quickly, so surgery is usually carried out within a few days of birth.

**Symptoms:**

Most children who have surgery will go on to have normal lives. There's a chance the child may experience some further problems, including:

* swallowing difficulties
* gastro-oesophageal reflux disease – where acid leaks out of the stomach and up into the oesophagus
* asthma-like symptoms – such as persistent coughing or wheezing
* recurrent chest infections
* the repaired section of windpipe becoming floppy and making breathing difficult

**Strategies:**

Check the student’s details on Staff Advantage to see if they require any support

For further guidance see below.

[NHS Information](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/oesophageal-atresia/)