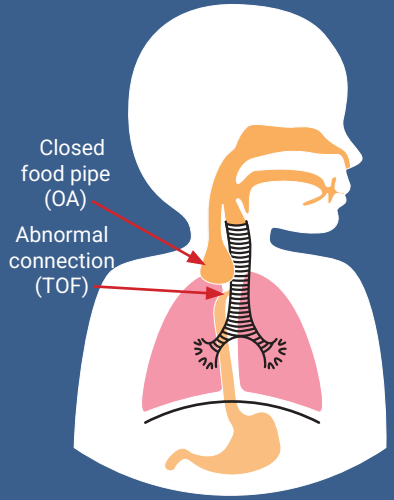
Oesophageal Atresia (OA) with Tracheo-Oesophageal Fistula (TOF)

Before surgery:
Oesophageal atresia with lower pouch fistula



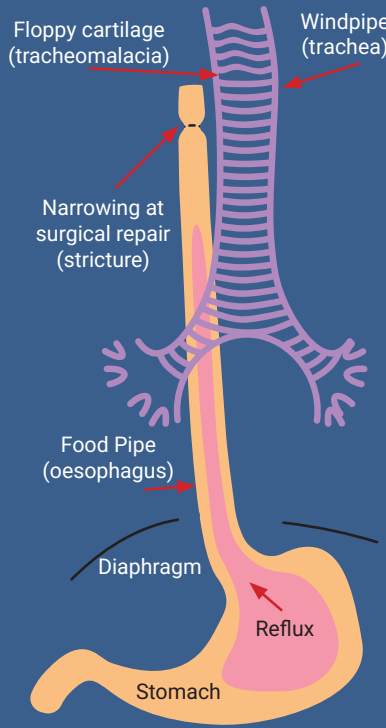
Key points for Early Years staff

Children can be born with a closed food pipe (OA) so food cannot travel to their stomach. Many also have an abnormal connection between their food pipe and windpipe (TOF).

Babies with OA/TOF have major surgery to survive. Their food pipe may never work normally, and food can become stuck or go down the wrong way. It can take a long time to eat without support.

A loud, barking "TOF cough" is common but on its own is not infectious. Children are often prone to chest infections though and may take longer to recover.

After surgery:



Children with OA/TOF must have an Individual Healthcare Plan. All staff who work with the child must be aware of the plan, including lunchtime supervisors, teachers and teaching assistants.

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Common problems with eating

- Weaning can take longer
- Swallowing can be trickier
- Extra care needed with lumpy, chewy or hard foods
- Food can get stuck in the food pipe – often called ‘a sticky’
- Stuck food can cause coughing or choking
- Stuck food can cause difficulty breathing
- Vomiting can occur because of reflux or a sticky

Things that help

- Know their suitable ‘safe’ foods and foods to avoid
- Serve foods with a suitable texture or pre-cut into small pieces if needed
- Give more time to eat
- Encourage frequent sips of drink
- Encourage chewing and letting food go down between mouthfuls
- Avoid distractions whilst eating
- Make sure first aiders are aware and always nearby at meal/snack times

If food does get stuck (a sticky)

- Help the child stay calm, use positive language
- Stop them eating until the sticky has resolved
- Sipping a drink can help the food go down
- They may cough, gag, or need backslaps to bring food up and may vomit
- Keep an emergency kit nearby: sick bowl, fizzy drink if specified, copy of their care plan and parent contact details
- If the food stays stuck or they are not breathing normally - **consider 999** - a sticky can become a medical emergency
- Tell parents/carers every time a sticky has occurred, even if resolved

In an emergency, give the ambulance crew the child’s care plan.
It is unlikely they will know this rare health condition and its care.

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