

AIIMS Nagpur Saves 6-Year-Old Child's Life After Severe Dog Bite Trauma; Restores Breathing and Voice

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In a rare display of medical expertise and multi-stage surgical care, the Department of Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) at AIIMS Nagpur has successfully salvaged the life, voice, and breathing airway of a courageous 6-year-old girl. The child suffered critical, life-threatening neck injuries in a ferocious stray dog attack while heroically shielding her younger sibling.



The incident left the young girl with devastating neck trauma. Recognizing the immediate threat to her life due to airway obstruction causing severe breathing difficulty, emergency airway stabilisation was performed through a tracheostomy—a surgical procedure in which a tube is inserted directly into the windpipe through the neck to allow air to reach the lungs.

Once stabilised, she was referred to the advanced care facilities at AIIMS Nagpur. Upon arrival at the Department of ENT, AIIMS Nagpur, she was evaluated thoroughly. The dog's teeth had shattered her thyroid cartilage (the protective shield of the voice box, commonly known as the Adam's apple) and caused injury to the right vocal cord. The resultant damage left her dependent on a surgical airway as the only means of breathing. She also had a bleeding wound within the airway, compromising her voice and swallowing ability.



Managing a severely crushed, infected child's airway is one of the most difficult challenges in modern medicine. The ENT Department at AIIMS Nagpur rose to the challenge by mapping out a multi-stage surgical treatment plan. She underwent a comprehensive examination under general anaesthesia, meticulous Paediatric ICU care, and airway surgery under general anaesthesia, which revealed complete blockage of her airway due to scarring.

Over several weeks, a dedicated team of surgeons, an anaesthesiologist, and a paediatrician rebuilt the fractured structural framework of her tiny voice box, cleared residual infections caused by the deep animal bites, and carefully reconstructed the internal lining of her windpipe.

Following the successful completion of these complex reconstructive surgeries, the child underwent an intensive rehabilitation programme. In the final milestone of her recovery, the surgical team successfully performed decannulation—the permanent removal of the artificial breathing tube from her neck. The child is now breathing naturally through her nose and mouth, speaking clearly, and has been safely discharged to reunite with the sibling she so selflessly protected. She has returned to school and can play without any breathing difficulties.

This recovery stands as a shining testament to the surgical precision and compassionate care provided by the ENT Department at AIIMS Nagpur, reinforcing the institute's capability to successfully manage some of the most critical paediatric airway emergencies. Executive Director Prof. Dr. Prashant Joshi lauded the six-year-old's bravery in saving her younger sibling. The ENT team at AIIMS Nagpur also acknowledged the support of the Departments of Paediatrics and Anaesthesiology in managing this unique case.

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PIB Nagpur | Saurabh Khekde/Darshana Rane

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