

# LETTERS



## IDENTIFYING A DIFFICULT INTUBATION BEFORE EXTUBATION

### To the editor:

When a difficult intubation is encountered in a patient, it is important to identify that patient to anyone involved in his or her care and future extubation. Often patients in recovery rooms and intensive care units are extubated by registered nurses, respira-

tory therapists, interns, and residents.

When extubation criteria are met and an extubation is to be performed in patients who have had a difficult intubation, it would be safest to have an airway expert available for reintubation. When provisions for reintubation are not made, catastrophic consequences can occur.

In my institution, we wrap a piece of red tape on the endotracheal tubes of patients who experience difficult intubations. In this way, those who are caring for the patient will know that

provisions for a difficult reintubation should be made before extubation. It also may be helpful to place a sticker on the outside of a patient's chart that identifies the patient as having a difficult intubation.

In my opinion, these measures will greatly improve patient safety.

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