

CORRESPONDENCE

What do you do when the laryngoscope bulb fails during intubation?

I enjoyed the excellent article on maintaining a laryngoscope written by Mike Yeats in Update in Anaesthesia No 4. One problem I have come across is failure of the laryngoscope during the intubation sequence. I suggest the easiest solution is to either perform a blind nasal intubation (if you have the necessary skills) or use the operating light shining in the mouth whilst exposing the larynx with the blade of the laryngoscope. This is usually successful and may be quicker than trying to fix the bulb.

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Editors' note:

This is useful advice but remember that if intubation is delayed care must be taken to ensure that the patient does not become hypoxic by using facemask ventilation. Often a quick check that the bulb is screwed in tightly and then reopening the blade to improve contact may be enough to remedy the situation. Always test the laryngoscope prior to inducing anaesthesia and, if possible, have a spare one at hand.