

Tube Feeding at Home: Your Daily Guide

Medical-Surgical · Gastrointestinal (GI)

A feeding tube carries liquid food, water, and medicine straight into your stomach or intestine. These steps help prevent choking, infection, and a blocked tube.

Sit up to prevent choking

- Sit up or raise the head of the bed at least 30 to 45 degrees during feeding.
- Stay up for 30 to 60 minutes after each feeding.
- With a pump feeding, keep your head up the whole time.

Check the tube before each use

- Look at the mark on the tube where it leaves your body.
- Your mark: _____.
- **If the mark has moved, do not use the tube. Call your care team.**

Flush with water

- Flush with 2 tablespoons (30 mL) of water before and after each feeding.
- Flush with 2 tablespoons (30 mL) before and after each medicine.

Give medicines safely

- Give one medicine at a time. Use liquid medicine when you can.
- **Never crush long-acting (extended-release) or coated (enteric-coated) pills.**

- Never mix medicine into the formula.

Keep the tube and mouth clean

- Wash the skin around the tube daily with soap and water. Pat dry.
- Brush your teeth and tongue twice a day, even if you do not eat by mouth.
- If the tube clogs, flush gently with warm water. Never force it or push a wire into it.

Call your provider today if you have

- Redness, swelling, or drainage around the tube
- A tube that has moved or come out: call right away
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or a swollen belly
- Fever, or a tube that stays blocked

Call 911 or your local emergency number if you have

- Coughing, choking, or trouble breathing during a feeding: stop the feeding first
- Blue or gray lips
- Severe belly pain with a hard belly

This handout supports, not replaces, advice from your own nurse or doctor.

Online: ncllexpace.com/patient-education/tube-feeding-at-home/patient

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