

### Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

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# Home Tube Feeding Guide

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**Tube Feeding Prescription**

You can get tube feeding formulas at medical supply companies, home infusion companies, and pharmacies. Your pharmacist can order any that are not in stock.

The feeding plan designed for you is:

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Nutritional Goals:**

- Calories \_\_\_\_\_
- Grams protein \_\_\_\_\_

Formula Name \_\_\_\_\_

- Volume each day \_\_\_\_\_
- Water, additional each day \_\_\_\_\_

This provides:

- Calories each day \_\_\_\_\_
- Protein each day \_\_\_\_\_

Your tube feeding prescription will meet \_\_\_\_\_% of your nutrient needs.

**Special Notes:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

have enough fluids. This can be caused by constant diarrhea or fever, not giving yourself enough fluids, and/or medicines. Some signs of dehydration are:

- Increased thirst
- Dry mouth
- Dry, cracked lips
- Dry, warm skin
- Weakness
- Fever
- Weight loss
- A decreased amount of urine

**Ways to Prevent Dehydration**

- Be sure to give yourself the recommended amount of water with each tube feeding.
- If you have fever or diarrhea, give yourself more water.
- Weigh yourself weekly. If you lose more than 2 pounds in 1 week or if you are losing weight every week, call your doctor.

**What to Do If You Become Dehydrated**

- Increase the amount of water you take each day until your signs of dehydration are gone.
- If the signs continue for 2 to 3 days, call your doctor.

**Notes**

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Belching
- Heartburn
- Gas pain

**Ways to Prevent Stomach Upset**

- Give your tube feedings slowly.
- If you feel full, wait an hour or so before giving more formula.
- Sit up in a chair or raise your head 30 degrees in bed for your feedings. Stay in this position for at least 30 minutes after your feedings.

**What to Do If You Have Stomach Upset**

- Give yourself small feedings more often. Your stomach may not be able to handle large amounts.
- Do **not** give yourself a tube feeding if you are nauseated or vomiting. Call your doctor for instructions.

***Dehydration***

Dehydration occurs when your body does not

**Feeding Schedule**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

- Number of feedings each day \_\_\_\_\_
- Amount of formula each feeding \_\_\_\_\_
- Amount of water to follow each feeding \_\_\_\_\_

• Rate of feeding \_\_\_\_\_

• Feeding times \_\_\_\_\_

• Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **How to Mix and Store Your Formula**

1. Wash your hands thoroughly before you start.
2. Shake the ready-to-use can or bottle.
3. Wash the top of the can with hot water before you open it.
4. Pour the formula directly from the can or bottle into the bag. If you are using only part of the can or bottle, measure the amount of formula for 1 feeding using a measuring cup marked in milliliters or ounces. If you are on continuous feedings, do not put more than 8 hours' worth of formula into the bag at 1 time. This will keep bacteria (germs) from growing in the formula.
5. If you do not use the whole can or bottle, label the opened can or bottle with the date and time you opened it. Cover and store it in the refrigerator.
6. If you do not use the rest of the opened can or bottle within 24 hours of opening it, throw it away.

While you are on tube feedings, you may have bowel movements less often than normal, and you may become constipated. Symptoms of constipation include:

- An uncomfortable full feeling
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Straining to have a bowel movement

### **Ways to Prevent Constipation**

Make enough time for:

- Feeding
- Rest
- Bowel movements

### **What to Do If You Have Constipation**

Increase your daily amount of water. If constipation continues, call your doctor.

### ***Stomach Upset***

Symptoms of stomach upset are:

### ***Diarrhea***

Diarrhea is frequent, loose, watery stools.

#### **Ways to Prevent Diarrhea**

- Relax for at least 30 minutes before and after your tube feedings.
- Make sure all the equipment you use for your tube feedings is thoroughly cleaned and rinsed.
- Keep open formula cans or bottles in the refrigerator when you are not using them.
- Take a walk or do other light activity after your feedings.

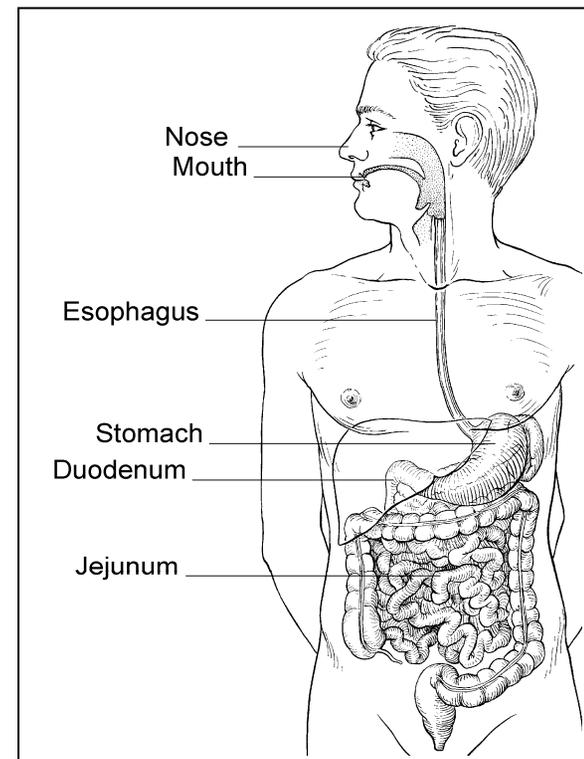
#### **What to Do If You Have Diarrhea**

- Give smaller feedings more often.
- Give your tube feedings more slowly.
- Increase the amount of water taken with each feeding to replace fluids.
- If your diarrhea lasts for 2 or 3 days, call your doctor.

### ***Constipation***

### **Feeding Tubes**

There are different types of feeding tubes. They are named for where they enter the body and where the tip of the tube is placed. For example, a *nasogastric* (NG) tube enters through the nose (“naso”) and goes into the stomach (“gastric”). If the tube enters through a surgical opening, its name ends in “ostomy.” A *gastrostomy* tube enters the stomach through a surgical opening in the abdomen. It is called a *percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy* (PEG). The location of your feeding tube will depend on your feeding method.



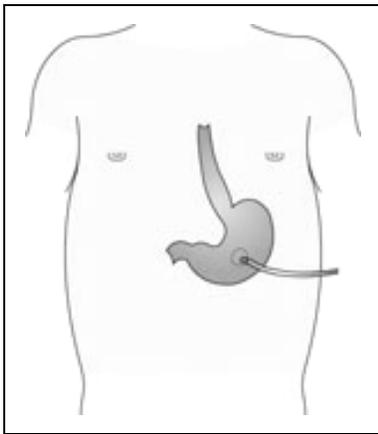
The digestive system

### About Tube Feedings

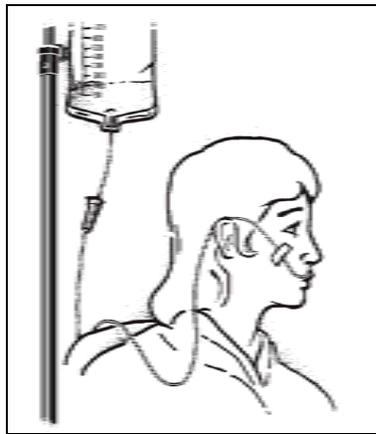
There are different ways to do tube feedings. The method chosen for you will be based on the type and location of your feeding tube and the amount of formula you will be giving yourself.

#### *How to Prepare*

- Wash your hands well.
- Gather all your supplies: formula, water and all the equipment you will need for feeding.
- Sit up in a chair, or in a bed with your head raised at least 30 degrees during your feeding. Stay in an upright position 30 to 60 minutes after your feeding. Do not lie flat because this may cause nausea and vomiting.



PEG tube



Gravity drip

### Special Instructions

- Crush your pills or empty your capsules into your feeding tube only as told by your medical team. Prescribed liquid medicines can be given through your feeding tube.
- If there is any delay in your feeding after you have prepared it, refrigerate the whole feeding bag and formula until you are ready to use it.
- Use each bag and tubing set no longer than 2 days.
- Always check to make sure that the feeding tube has not become twisted. Twisted tubes will affect the flow of formula.

### Possible Problems

Water can be given by gravity method, by pump, or by syringe. The best method for you to use is \_\_\_\_\_.

To give yourself water:

- Open the container. Pour in \_\_\_\_\_ ml of water and close the container.
- Open the flow-regulator clamp.
- When the water has emptied from the tubing, close the flow-regulator clamp. Then, clamp your feeding tube closed.
- Remove the container tubing from the feeding tube.
- If you are using disposable equipment, throw away the container and tubing. If your equipment is reusable, wash it in hot, soapy water. Rinse it well in warm water and hang it to dry. When it is dry, store your equipment in a clean area.

### ***Checking Residual***

*Residual* is the formula that is still in your stomach from the last feeding. Checking how much residual is left is a way to make sure your stomach is emptying formula.

- Make sure your tube is placed correctly. Draw back on the plunger to check your stomach contents, called *gastric residual*. Note the amount by looking at the number on the syringe, then put this fluid back into your stomach.
- If your gastric residual is more than 150 ml, or if you feel very full or nauseated, call your doctor before giving your feeding. Talk with your doctor as soon as possible if you have these symptoms so you do not miss receiving the formula you need.
- Remove the syringe from the end of the feeding tube.
- Remove the plunger from the syringe.
- Rinse the syringe.

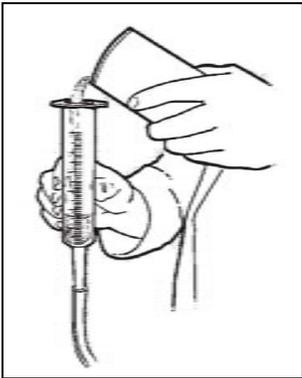
If you are followed by a home health care service, they may check your gastric residuals and tube placement. Still, you need to know the symptoms of having gastric residual.

## Giving Yourself a Tube Feeding

Now you are ready to give your tube feeding. The tube feeding method you will use is:

### Syringe Method

- Attach a clean syringe to your feeding tube.

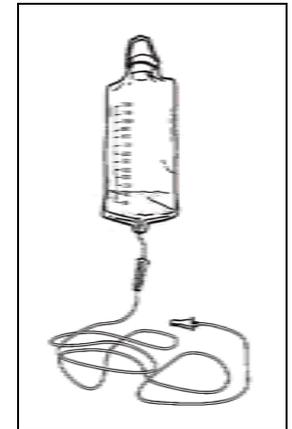


Pouring the formula into the syringe

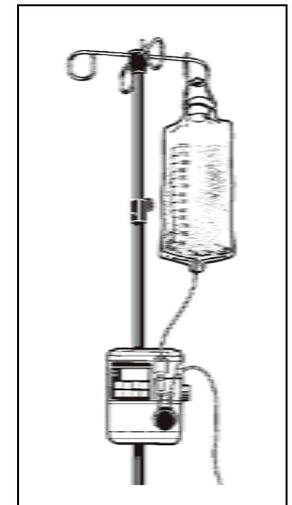
- Hold the syringe upright and pour the formula into it. Add more formula to the syringe before it empties to keep air from going into your stomach. Air can cause bloating.
- Adjust the placement of the syringe to control the flow of formula. Lower the syringe to make the formula flow more slowly and raise it to make formula flow more quickly. Your feeding should last about 15 to 20 minutes.
- After you have given yourself the formula, pour the correct amount of water into your syringe. Water helps prevent dehydration, and it will keep your feeding tube from getting clogged.
- Close off the tube using the clamp. Remove the syringe.
- Wash the syringe and plunger in hot, soapy water, rinse well in warm water, and then air dry.
- Store your supplies in a clean, covered container.

### Gravity Drip or Pump Method

- Close the flow-regulator clamp on your feeding set.
- Pour the formula into the container.
- Hang the feeding container on an IV pole or wall hook about 2 feet above your head.
- Squeeze the drip chamber until it is about  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  full of formula.
- Remove the cover cap from the end of the feeding set tubing. Connect the tip of the tubing to your feeding tube.
- **For gravity-drip feeding:** Open the flow-regulator clamp on your tubing. The formula should flow in for about 20 to 30 minutes. You can speed up the flow by opening the clamp on the tubing or slow it down by closing the clamp.
- **For pump feeding:** Set the desired flow rate on the feeding pump. Your rate is \_\_\_\_\_. Then:
  - Attach your tubing to the pump.
  - Open the flow-regulator clamp.
  - Turn on the pump.
- When the container is empty, but before all the formula is out of the drip chamber, close the flow-regulator clamp. Turn off the pump.



Gravity drip



Pump method