

Going Home with a Feeding Tube

Information about Flushes

Patient Information Leaflet

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Leaflet provided by:

Name.....

Grade/designation.....

Disclaimer for patients: If you have been provided with this leaflet by someone other than a Dietitian, please contact the dietetic department on 0151 529 3473

Flushing your feeding tube regularly is important to prevent your tube from becoming blocked, as well as providing hydration if you are unable to drink fluids.

How should I flush my tube?

Always use cooled, boiled water for flushing your tube. Use a 60ml syringe to flush the tube with the volume as directed by your dietitian.

Do this:

- Before starting/restarting or stopping a feed
- Whenever feeding is interrupted for any reason
- If you are bolus feeding flush before and after every bolus
- If you are not using your tube for feeding flush your tube at least once daily
- If you have a jejunostomy tube, nasojejunal tube, or nasogastric feeding tube, you must flush the tube every 4-6 hours during the daytime

How do I take my medications?

- Flush your tube before and after each medication dose. Your Dietitian will advise you on how much water to flush with
- If you are taking several medications, give each one separately and flush the tube with 5-10ml between each one.
- Use **liquid** or **dispersible** medicines when possible.
- If you have to use a tablet, crush finely and dissolve in cooled, boiled water to form a liquid with particles as small as possible.

Do not mix medicines together as some medications may react and can block the feeding tube.

What happens if my tube becomes blocked?

- Switch off your feeding pump if you use one and it is running
- Check the giving set to see if you can see a blockage or a kink in the tube
- Check your feeding tube and see if you can see a blockage
- Draw up lukewarm or carbonated water into a 60ml syringe and flush this down the tube but do not force it. Gently squeeze along the feeding tube as you do this. Repeat if it does not clear.
- Using a smaller syringe, e.g. 5ml if you have one, can help to provide greater force to clear blockages.
- Do not use fruit juice, cola or other sugary drinks to unblock the tube
- If you still cannot clear the blockage contact your community tube care nurse if within working hours, or contact the 24 hour helpline provided by your feeding company. If the issue is not resolved, contact your Dietitian or hospital tube care nurse. If it is outside of normal working hours and you are unable to wait until the next day, you may need to attend your local Accident and Emergency department.

What can I put down the tube?

- ✓ The feed as prescribed by your Dietitian.
- ✓ Cooled, boiled water.
- X **Do not** put normal or liquidised food or other fluids/drinks down the tube as this could block it.

Contact Numbers:

- Community Dietitians:
- Aintree Hospital Dietitian:..... (0151) 529 3473
- Aintree Hospital Nutrition Nurses: call (0151) 525 5980
- Abbott Hospital to Home Helpline: 0800 018 3799
- Nutricia Homeward Advice Line: 0800 093 3672



If you require a special edition of this leaflet

This leaflet is available in large print, Braille, on audio tape or disk and in other languages on request. Please contact:

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Email: interpretationandtranslation@liverpoolft.nhs.uk