

Going home with a Nasogastric (NG) feeding tube

Patient name:

Date:

Tube length at the nose:

Going home with a feeding tube can be a daunting prospect; your dietitian and ward nurses will support you through this process and allow time for you and your family to become confident at self-managing your feeding tube. This leaflet provides a step by step guide on how to safely manage your tube at home and what to do if you have a problem.

What are the risks associated with NG feeding?

The main risk associated with a NG tube is that it can move or become dislodged and feed, fluids or medication can accidentally go into the lungs rather than the stomach which can cause serious harm or infection. To reduce the risk of this it is vital that the position of the tube is checked before every use by confirming it is within the stomach. This is carried out using pH strips to check for the presence of stomach acid, monitor tube length and symptoms. NG tubes are at risk of moving during episodes of coughing, retching, vomiting or pulling on the tube.

Routine management & hygiene

- Wash your hands thoroughly before and after use.
- Check the 'use by' dates on the feed and equipment.
- Store feed in a cool dry place.
- Discard any feed that has been open for 24 hours or more.
- Throw away feed containers and giving sets after 24 hours or on completing feed.
- Use freshly drawn tap water to flush the tube before and after feed or medication administration.
- To keep the tube patent, you should flush the tube with water every 3-4 hours during the daytime when you're not feeding.
- Keep pH paper clean and dry in the sealed container.
- Monitor tube position at nose and reposition tape regularly to prevent pressure sores.

Your nutritional requirements

Based on your weight of ____kg it is estimated your daily nutritional requirements are:

____kcal ____ grams of protein ____ mls fluid

Your prescribed feeding regime

Time	Feed name	Volume (mls)	Rate (ml/hr)	Water flushes (mls)

The above regime provides

___kcal ___ grams of protein ___ mls fluid

If you have a raised temperature, the weather is very hot or your urine appears dark, you may require extra water flushes which can be given via your tube. Please seek advice from your dietitian if you are unsure.

When adding up the volumes of fluid you have had, you must include any extra given with medication.

Section 1: How to check the position of a nasogastric (NG) tube

Checking the position of the NG should be carried out before administering feed, water flushes or medications and following any episodes of vomiting, retching or coughing which may alter the tubes position.

1. Wash your hands.
2. Check the length of your tube at the nose, this should match the length on insertion documented on the inside cover. If your tube has moved, contact your support team for advice.
3. Gather your equipment – Purple 60ml syringe, pH strip, feed, giving set, pump and stand.
4. Attach the 60ml syringe to your NG tube.
5. Slowly draw back the syringe until you get a small amount of liquid from your stomach into the syringe (This is called "an aspirate").

6. Remove the syringe from the NG tube with the liquid still contained, you will need to keep the tension on the syringe whilst the syringe is removed.
7. Place a few drops of the liquid from the syringe onto the pH strip.
8. Match the colour change of the pH strip with the colour code on the container. The pH of stomach acid should produce a reading of 5.0 or below. Use Johnsons 'aspHirate' pH strips only, these will be provided to you from the ward or feeding company.

Where the pH reading is 5.0 or below it is safe to administer feed, fluids or medication as advised.

Where there is a pH reading greater than 5.0, do not administer feed, fluids or medication.

For nasogastric (NG) tubes the pH number is

5 or Less

Your tube is in the stomach and you can use your tube for flushes, feed and medication.

More than 5

Do not put anything through your tube. Follow the troubleshooting advice in section 4.

The aspirate (pH) of your NG tube needs to be checked before every administration of feed/fluid/medication

If you did not get any liquid in the syringe – repeat steps 1-9 again, if you are still unable to draw up fluid refer to the troubleshooting table in section 6.

Section 2: How to administer feed and fluids

- Before starting ensure the tube is in the correct position by following the steps in section 1. Then flush the feeding tube with **60mls of freshly drawn tap water**.
- Shake the feed bag and twist off the cap.
- Open your giving set, close the clamp, remove the plastic cap and tightly screw the giving set to the feed bag breaking the foil seal.
- Hang the bag on the drip stand, attach the giving set to feeding pump and prime the giving set.
- Programme the pump to the rate and volume agreed with your dietitian.
- Whilst the feed is running and for 1 hour afterwards, remain in raised head position of 45° or more. If feed is running overnight use two or more pillows to keep your upper body raised up.
- When the feed is finished dispose of all the equipment.
- Flush the feeding tube as advised by your dietitian.

Section 3: How to take medications?

- Always follow advice from your pharmacist or doctor. Use liquid or dispersible preparations where possible.
- Always use the purple enteral syringes to measure and administer medicines, you will be provided with a selection of 10ml, 20ml or 60ml sizes.
- Confirm the position of your tube as per the steps in section 1, unless administering during feeding or as feed is being disconnected.
- Flush feeding tube with 30-60mls of water.
- Give each medication separately and flush with at least 20ml of water between each medication or until tube feels clear of debris.

- Please note, syrup medications may need watering down. Medicines in tablet form may need to be crushed to a fine powder and mixed with water. Flushed well to clear all residues.
- Further guidance on how to administer medications via a feeding tube can be given by the pharmacist.
- Medicines should NOT be combined.

Section 4: Ongoing supplies and delivery

- You will be registered with our feeding company, Fresenius-Kabi Homecare. Arrangements will be made for regular delivery of feed and ancillaries direct to your home.
- Fresenius-Kabi will contact you within two working days of discharge and then monthly to arrange delivery.
- You will have a large delivery so please clear a space in preparation.
- Fresenius-Kabi provides a 24hour helpline for support and enquiries (see below).

Section 5: Storage of feed and equipment

- pH strips must be kept dry and clean. Store them in the container they come in, ensuring the lid is properly sealed.
- Before opening, liquid feed is sterile and does not need to be kept in the fridge. Store in a cool dry place:
 - out of direct sunlight.
 - away from heaters or radiators.
 - away from areas where rodents and insects may be able to contaminate the feed.
- Before opening, giving sets and syringes are sterile. Store them in a cool dry place.

Section 6: Troubleshooting...

Problem	Cause	Action
Blocked tube	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Feed debris or medication particles are blocking the feeding tube. ■ Extended rest period without flushes. ■ Not flushing tube after feed is completed or temporarily stopped. ■ Failing feeding tube. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Try using warm water, or carbonated water syringed into the tube using a 'push-pause' technique. You may need to keep some water in the tube for around 30 minutes to allow the blockage to dissolve. You may need to repeat several times. ■ Massaging the tube to dislodge any residue. ■ Routine flushing before and after feeding and all medications will reduce the likelihood of blockages.
Tube moved or fallen out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Episodes of coughing, retching, vomiting & sneezing. ■ The giving set is pulled or tangled up. ■ The tape securing the tube at the nose or cheek has become moist and loose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Stop feed and do not use tube until the tube is repositioned and the correct position confirmed. ■ Check line markings at the nose. ■ Check the tape at the nose and cheek is secure. ■ Check the position of the tube with pH aspirate. ■ Contact ward or dietitian for advice. ■ If the tube falls out do not try to replace, contact your support team.
Unable to obtain aspirate (stomach contents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Long period without feed or fluid. ■ Positioning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lie on left side for 15 minutes, recheck aspirate in this position. ■ You may need to try multiple times. ■ Inject 10ml of air into the tube using a 60ml syringe. Recheck aspirate. ■ Brush your teeth or provide mouth care to stimulate acid production. ■ If problems remain, contact your nurse or dietitian for advice.
pH aspirate not within acceptable level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Residual feed or water within the tube. ■ Some medications may reduce acidity in the stomach- please discuss with your dietitian or nurse. ■ Tube migration/ dislodged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Do not feed, wait 30 minutes and re-check (you may need to try this multiple times). ■ If problems persist contact your nurse, dietitian. ■ If out of hours do not feed and retry in the morning. ■ Monitor for symptoms of nausea, reflex, coughing or breathlessness.
Pressure sore at rim of nostril	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Poor positioning causing the tube to rub/indent the nose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Frequently, remove tape, wash and dry area; replace tape with the tube at a different angle at the nose. ■ Apply a barrier cream if required.
Damaged tube	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Markings worn. ■ Visible damage from constant use. ■ Difficulties flushing or feeding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Contact your support team.

Section 7: Who to contact...

Hospital Dietitians 01392 402044

Working week Monday to Friday between
8.30am-4.30pm.

*If you get our answering service please leave your
name, hospital number and Dietitians name.*

Nutrition Nurse 01392 404635

Working week Monday to Friday between 8am-
6pm.

Yeo Ward..... 01392 402873

Weekends or out of hours (6pm-8am).

Fresenius-Kabi Homecare 0808 100 1990

24hr helpline.

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