



PATIENT INFORMATION

Care for the Gastrostomy Tube (G-Tube)

This fact sheet has been developed to assist you in caring for a gastrostomy tube (G-tube) at home. It is important that you follow this routine daily or as directed. If you have any questions, call your baby's doctor.

Supplies Needed:

- Soap and water
- Clean gauze pads
- Scissors
- Tape
- Syringe for flushing (12 ml syringe)
- Water for flushing

Cleaning and Dressing the Wound

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Remove the old dressing and look at the area where the tube enters the skin. Check for redness, swelling, any drainage or excess skin growing around the tube. A small amount of clear, tan drainage can be normal.
3. Wash skin around the G-tube with soap and warm water to remove any drainage and/or crusting. If there are stitches, clean around them gently and dry skin thoroughly. The site should be kept clean and dry at all times.
4. Redress as instructed by your doctor or nurse. Anchor the end of the tube by putting a piece of tape around the tube and pinning it to a folded piece of tape on his/her stomach or pin it to his/her diaper or T-shirt. Onesies or tubular dressings also help safely secure the tube.
5. Do not use ointment around tube site unless directed by your baby's doctor or nurse.

Flushing the G-Tube

It is important to flush your baby's G-tube before and after any tube feedings, before and after any medications or at least every eight hours. Usually 3-10 ml of water will clear the tube; however, your doctor or nurse will tell you the amount to give your baby.

Giving Medications

Liquid medications may be injected directly into the tube after the tube has been flushed.

For pills, first check with your doctor or pharmacist before crushing any medications. Crush the medicines into a powder and mix with enough water to make a liquid (1-10 mls).

For capsules, first check with your doctor or pharmacist before opening the capsule. Open and dissolve powder with enough water to make a liquid (1-10 mls).

Remember: Do not mix medicines unless directed by your health care team.

Feeding Through the G-Tube

Feeding is a special time for you and your baby. It is important to hold and talk to your baby during feedings. Help your baby learn to use his or her mouth by offering the pacifier and other pleasant oral experiences.

Your baby will eat on the following schedule:

Give _____ ml of breast milk or formula at each feeding.

If a pump is used, run at _____ ml per hour.

continued on back

If the baby is in bed during feedings raise the head of the bed 30 degrees.

Additional feeding instructions:

Venting

You may need to vent the G-tube to remove excess air or fluid in your baby's stomach. It can be done two different ways. Your doctor or nurse will tell you if this is needed.

Open the G-tube port and attach to a drainage device (such as a syringe). You may be asked to measure and record the amount of drainage. Your physician may instruct you to vent the G-tube using a catheter-tip syringe and aspirating the excess air or gastric fluid from your baby's stomach. This method is used for bloating, distension or gagging. You may be asked to measure and record drainage and frequency.

Problem Solving

If the G-tube was pulled out:

Cover with small, clean dressing and tape. Then call the baby's doctor or nurse. The G-tube needs to be put in as soon as possible within 1 to 6 hours so the tract will not close. Bring the tube with you to the doctor.

If you have been instructed in tube replacement, do the following:

- Lubricate the tube.
- Insert the tube approximately 2 inches or until milk comes out.
- Tie a knot at the end of the tube.

- Tape the tube to the abdomen and contact your doctor.
- Do not allow more than 6 hours to pass without a feeding.

Redness and irritation:

This may be caused by leakage or infection. Continue routine care and contact your baby's doctor. A barrier cream may be ordered at this time.

Leaking:

Leaking can be caused by a malfunctioning tube or increased air. Keep dressing clean and dry and try more frequent venting. The tube may need to be replaced.

If skin or excess tissue appears to be growing where the tube enters the skin:

Some children are more prone to this problem than others. Call your baby's doctor or nurse to discuss treatment.

If the G-tube is clogged:

Thick formulas or medication may be causing the clog. Try to push warm water slowly into the tube with a 10 ml syringe. Repeat every 10 to 15 minutes. **Never put any object into the tube to unclog it.** If you are unable to unclog the tube, call you baby's doctor or nurse.

Tips

- It is important that you know what type and size tube your baby has. Be sure to check with your doctor or nurse to get this information.
- Discuss with your doctor some ways you can help your baby to develop oral motor skills.
- Always call your doctor or nurse if you have questions or problems.

Your Baby's G-Tube size is _____

Name of Surgeon _____

Pediatric Surgery Clinic Telephone: 350-7846

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