

FACT SHEET



TUBE FEEDING FOR CHILDREN

Pennsylvania Chapter

Good nutrition maintains health, as well as normal growth and development. Many children with different medical problems receive treatment with a nasogastric tube (NG) or gastrostomy tube (GT or G-Tube). Children use these tubes for one of several reasons: either they cannot eat at all, or they cannot eat enough to meet their nutritional requirements, or they cannot swallow safely. Tube feeding is a way to give fluids, calories, and medications to a child.

POSSIBLE REASONS FOR TUBE FEEDINGS

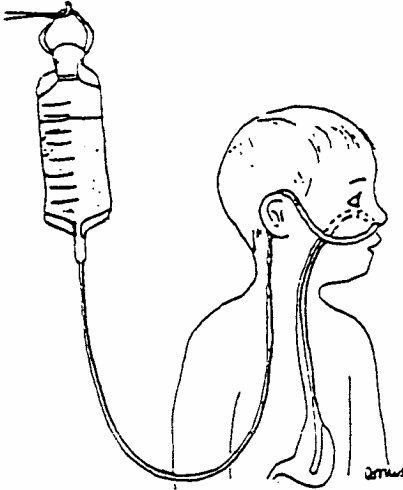
- ◆ Prematurity
- ◆ Central nervous system problems
- ◆ Severe cerebral palsy
- ◆ Burns
- ◆ Head trauma
- ◆ After surgery
- ◆ Inherited metabolic disorders
- ◆ Gastrointestinal disease
- ◆ Severe gastroesophageal reflux
- ◆ Failure to thrive
- ◆ Severe refusal to eat food
- ◆ Severe food allergy
- ◆ Disorders of the esophagus
- ◆ Abnormalities of the anatomy of the gastrointestinal tract
- ◆ Severe cleft lip and cleft palate



METHODS OF TUBE FEEDING

NASOGASTRIC TUBE (NG Tube):

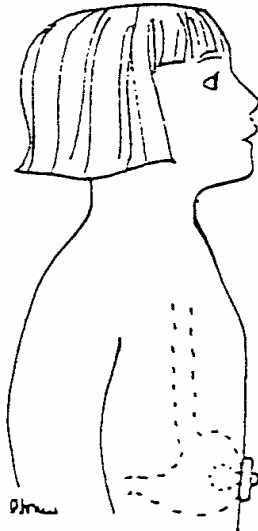
A caregiver passes a small tube through the child's nose to the stomach.



Child with nasogastric tube

GASTROSTOMY TUBE (GT or G Tube):

Usually a surgeon makes an opening through the skin, abdominal wall and stomach wall, then puts into the opening a tube or a small porthole-like device that has an opening at skin level (a button). "Gastrostomy" is the name of the opening into the stomach through the abdominal wall and skin. Using the tube or button, caregivers can put liquid feedings, fluids, and medication into the child's stomach.



**Child with skin level
gastrostomy tube (Button or PEG)**

OROGASTRIC TUBE

A caregiver passes a small tube through the child's mouth to the stomach. Doctors prescribe nasogastric tubes or gastrostomy tubes more often than orogastric tubes.

TUBE FEEDING GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. **Authorization for tube feedings:** Tube feedings require authorization and instructions from a physician. The prescribing physician and the parent must regularly update the directions for other caregivers. Child care facilities should request that the child's physician complete a care or treatment plan.
2. **Learning the Technique:** The child care staff should have a health professional instruct them in all the techniques that the child may require. The health professional should go over everything that could be a problem and what to do if the problem occurs. Before taking responsibility for independently performing these techniques, caregiver should demonstrate them for the health professional who is teaching them.
3. **Supplies and Equipment:** The parent will provide the prescribed equipment, feedings and medications necessary for the procedure at the child care facility.
4. **Feeding by Mouth:** Some children use tube feedings to supplement what they eat by mouth. Sometimes the child receives supplemental feedings only during the night while sleeping. Sometimes the child gets a tube feeding only on days when the child has eaten too little by mouth. The details about feedings by mouth and by tube should be part of the instructions provided by the prescribing physician.
5. **Oral Stimulation:** The mouth is a very sensitive part of the body. For most infants, sucking is comforting. Babies on tube feedings benefit from use of a pacifier during feedings to stimulate the lips, gums, and tongue. As the child grows, the child should have other opportunities to chew or suck. Discuss with the child's specialist and parent how to use oral stimulation to promote normal development.
6. **Growth and Development:** Children who are tube fed have the same basic needs for growth and development as other children. Discuss with the child's specialist and parent which physical activities are safe for the child who is tube fed.
7. **Eating and Socialization.** If the prescribing physician approves, caregivers should encourage the child to touch and taste food. Participation with other people at the table during mealtime is important, even though the child receives nourishment through a tube or button.

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