

Feeding Tubes - G and J Tubes

Definition

- A gastrostomy tube (G-tube) or a jejunostomy tube (J-tube) gives your child liquid food, fluids or medicines.

Health Information

Types

- Gastrostomy tubes go through the skin into the stomach.
- Jejunostomy tubes go through the skin into the intestine.
- Both tubes are put in with a surgery.
- They are used for a long time, often for years.

Reasons for Using Feeding Tubes

- Some children have medical conditions that make it hard to eat or drink by mouth.
- **Nutrition.** Feeding tubes help your child gain weight and grow. You can give formula and other liquid food through the tube.
- **Hydration.** You can give your child water through the tube.
- **Medicine.** You can give your child medicine through the tube.

Care Advice

1. Key Points

- G-tubes and J-tubes are put through the skin into the gut.
- They are used to give liquid food, fluid and medicine.
- Here's some information to help you care for your child's feeding tube.

2. Check Tube Position

- With every new tube, measure the amount of tube sticking out of the skin. Write this down. Then you will always have a way to know if the tube is dislodged.
- Always check the position of the tube before using it.

3. Flush the Tube

- Flush the feeding tube with water after each use.
- Reason: this will prevent the tube from getting clogged.

4. Clean the Tube Skin Site

- Gently wash the skin around the G or J-tube with soap and water daily. Always wash your hands first.
- Use a Q-tip or gauze to remove any crust.
- After washing, let the area air dry for 20 minutes.
- If your child has a G-tube button, rotate it a full circle with each cleaning.
- Caution: if your child has a J-tube, do not rotate it. Reason: this may kink or dislodge it.
- Put a dressing over the area, if your doctor or nurse has told you to.

5. If Tube Leaks

- A small amount of leaking around a G or J-tube is normal.
- Leaking can happen after the tube is first placed. It can also happen after replacing an old tube.
- To help with leaking, gently pull the tube away from the skin until you feel resistance.
- Keep the site clean and dry.
- If leakage irritates the skin, use liquid antacid (Maalox or Mylanta, no prescription needed). Dab some on the skin around the site. Let it dry, then cover it with gauze.

6. Check Tube Balloon

- If your child's tube is held in place with a balloon, check the balloon's water level once each week.
- Use a syringe to remove the water from the balloon. See how much is in the syringe.
- The wrong amount of water may be in the balloon. Add or remove water until the right amount is in the syringe.
- If the amount of water is wrong often, the balloon may have a hole. Then it needs to be replaced.

7. If Tube is Blocked

- Feeding tubes can get blocked, most often with thick food or medicine.
- Follow any advice your doctor gave you to unblock the tube.
- If you still cannot unblock it, call your doctor or home health care nurse. If you can't reach them, go to the emergency room.
- Bring in any spare tubes you may have. These can be used if the tube needs to be replaced.

8. If G or J Tube Comes Out

- When a G or J tube comes out, the hole closes within a couple hours.
- If you know how, replace the tube as soon as you can
- If you can't replace it, call your doctor or home health care nurse. If you cannot reach them, go to the emergency room.
- Bring your spare tube in case they do not have your size.
- If you don't have a spare, bring your old tube. This helps the staff know the right tube size.

9. What to Expect

- G and J tubes can be used for years.
- They are usually replaced every 3 to 6 months.
- With regular care, tubes work well to give your child liquid food, fluid and medicines.

Call Your Doctor If

- The feeding tube comes out and can't be replaced
- The feeding tube is cracked or broken
- You cannot unblock the feeding tube
- Vomiting occurs
- You think your child needs to be seen
- You have other questions or concerns

Pediatric Care Advice

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