

# Tube Feeding for Children

Tube feeding is a way to give your child nutrition, fluids, and medicines through a tube that's placed into the stomach.

It can be used when a health problem makes it hard for your child to eat or drink.

A doctor will place the tube in your child's stomach and secure it so that it stays in place.

Depending on why your child needs the tube, it may be used for several weeks or months, or sometimes longer.

There are several different methods you can use to feed your child with a feeding tube.

These include using a gravity bag, a feeding syringe, or a pump.

With a gravity bag, you hang a bag of tube feeding formula from a pole or hook, and the formula flows down the tube into your child's stomach.

Or you may put formula directly into the tube using a feeding syringe.

A bag and pump can also be used.

The pump pushes the formula through the tube into the stomach.

Your care team can show you exactly how to do the feeding method you choose.

Make sure your child is sitting up or has their head and upper body raised in bed anytime you are using their tube to give them formula, other fluids, or medicines.

Your doctor will tell you how long your child should keep sitting up after finishing a feeding.

It can take time to get used to having a feeding tube.

But your child can still be active and do most of the things they like to do.

Now, here are some things you can do to prevent infection and avoid problems with your child's feeding tube.

Before you touch the tube, wash your hands with soap and water.

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Dry your hands with a clean cloth.

Clean the end of the tube with an antiseptic wipe after each use.

And keep the skin where the tube goes into the belly clean and dry.

Follow any instructions your doctor gave you about flushing the tube.

This includes before and after feedings and after giving medicine through the tube.

Use the syringe you were given.

If the tube is blocked, try to clear it by flushing it with warm water.

Never try to clear a blocked tube with a wire or another object.

When it's not being used, clamp the tube close to your child's body.

And a note of caution: Long tubing, like the kind that is used with gravity bags or pumps, can become tangled around your child's neck.

This could strangle your child.

So you'll want to supervise your child during feedings.

And make sure to store tubing out of your child's reach when not in use.

Ask your doctor or nurse for suggestions on how to prevent the tubing from becoming wrapped around your child's neck during feedings.

Part of caring for your child's feeding tube is watching for any problems that might come up.

Call your care team right away if you see signs of infection.

Signs include increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness in the skin around the tube, or a fever.

Call the doctor if your child has nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

And call if the tube falls out or leaks, or if it's blocked and flushing the tube doesn't help.

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At first, it may seem like there's a lot to keep track of when caring for a feeding tube.

But with time and practice, it will get easier.

Remember, your care team is here to help.

And you can always call your doctor if you have any questions.