

Tube Feeding by Gravity

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The following are general guidelines for administering your tube feeding.

Before starting, follow your healthcare professional's instructions to check the position of your tube before you begin a feeding.

Gather Supplies

- Feeding container and tubing (gravity set)
- Formula (room temperature)
- Pole
- Syringe (60 mL)
- Water (room temperature)

Preparation:

1. Wash hands thoroughly.
2. Rinse the top of the formula container with hot water or wipe with clean wet paper towel.
3. Shake formula container well before opening.
4. Use syringe to flush feeding tube with water, as directed by your healthcare professional.
5. Pour formula into feeding container and close cap.
6. Hang feeding container on pole so it is at least 18 inches above stomach.
7. If using a pre-filled feeding container, shake and connect as directed.
8. Open clamp on flow regulator until the formula fills the tubing.
9. Close clamp on the flow regulator.
10. Make sure drip chamber on the tubing is about half full.

Administration:

1. Sit or lie with head elevated at least 30 degrees (about the height of two pillows) and remain in this position for 30 to 60 minutes after each feeding.
2. Open (unclamp or uncap) feeding tube.
3. Connect tip on the end of gravity set into feeding tube.
4. Open flow regulator clamp to adjust flow rate, as directed by your healthcare professional.
5. After feeding, close and disconnect gravity set from feeding tube.
6. Use syringe to flush feeding tube with water, as directed.
7. Close (reclamp or recap) feeding tube.

Making your home tube feeding a pleasant experience.

The transition to home tube feeding requires some adjustments and there are ways to make them easier. For example, talking to friends and family about your tube feeding may make you more comfortable with the transition. Or, consider scheduling your feedings during family meal time.

If you choose to administer your feedings at other times, be sure to continue to engage in family and other social activities. The adjustment may require time and patience, but soon it will become a routine.

Problems & Solutions

STOMACH UPSET

An uncomfortable feeling of nausea, bloating or gas pain may sometimes result from home tube feedings. Occasionally, belching or vomiting can also occur.

Probable Causes:

- Formula is being fed too fast
- Formula is too cold
- Formula is left open at room temperature or in feeding bag for too long
- Formula is too concentrated
- Too much formula given in a short amount of time
- Lying flat during or immediately after receiving your feeding
- Constipation
- Medication side effect
- Exercising or engaging in too much activity right after a feeding
- Intolerance to the formula

Important Guidelines:

- Remove the formula from the refrigerator at least 30 minutes prior to the feeding, allowing it to warm to room temperature.
- Make sure you are following the directions for the prescribed amount of formula and/or correct flow rate.
- Do not allow formula to sit at room temperature or hang longer than the recommended time.
- Do not lie flat during or just after a feeding. Sit or lie at a 30-degree angle (about the height of two pillows) during the feeding and for 30 to 60 minutes after the feeding.

DIARRHEA

Diarrhea—frequent loose and watery stools—can sometimes occur on a home tube feeding program.

Probable Causes:

- Medication side effects
- Formula is too cold
- Feeding pump rate is too high
- No fiber, or not enough fiber, in your formula
- Formula is being fed too fast by syringe or gravity feeding
- Formula may be spoiled or contaminated by bacteria
- Formula intolerance

Important Guidelines:

- Because emotions can affect digestion, try to relax during the feeding.
- Remove the formula from the refrigerator at least 30 minutes prior to the feeding, allowing it to warm to room temperature.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water and wipe the top of the formula container with a clean wet paper towel before you handle the formula and tubing.
- Unopened formula should be stored in a cool, dry place.
- Opened containers of formula should be re-closed or tightly covered and stored in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours.
- Discard formula that has been opened and left in the refrigerator for longer than 24 hours.
- Do not exceed the recommended hang time.
- Replace your feeding container and tubing as directed by your home care provider.

Questions, Concerns or Problems

Should there be any questions, concerns or problems related to your tube feeding, contact your doctor or you can reach out to Upstate HomeCare's Enteral specialists at **877.286.0800 x6058**.