

2014

Home Tube Feeding

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Home Tube Feeding

Getting ready

- Wash your hands well before handling your formula or equipment.
- Check the expiry dates of your formula.
- Inspect cans for bulging before opening. Do not use any cans that are bulged.
- Cover and store any opened formula in the refrigerator. Do not keep opened formula for more than 24 hours. Take opened formula out of the fridge 30 minutes before feeding.
- Formula should be at room temperature before giving it.
- Do not hang your formula for more than 8-12 hours.
- Clean feeding equipment after each use.

Your home tube feeding schedule

Your tube feeding formula: _____

You will need _____ bottles/cans each week

Time	Name of formula	# of bottles/ cans	Time to run feed	Amount water flush

You may adjust your feeding schedule, but you need _____ bottles/cans of formula and _____ flushes per day.

Buying formula

You can buy your tube feeding formula (liquid nutrition) at your local drugstore or pharmacy. If they do not carry your formula, ask them to order it. Give them a few days to have the product brought in.

You may choose to use a different formula than the one used in the hospital. If you do, then make sure each bottle or can provides at least _____ calories, _____ grams of protein, and _____ grams of fibre.

Home delivery

- You can order formula for home delivery. A selection of feeds and supplies can be sent to your home, if you live in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, or New Brunswick.
- To place an order, call the toll free number at 1-866-224-1060 or locally at (902) 473-7096.
- You must order full cases of formula. A case usually has 24-27 cans.

Insurance coverage

Insurance may cover part of the cost of tube feeding formulas and/or supplies. Check with your insurance company. A physician's letter is often required to get coverage.

Weight

It is important to weigh yourself at the same time each week to make sure you are not losing weight. Weight loss can put you at risk for malnutrition.

Questions to ask:

1. Have you had any unplanned weight loss?
2. Are you unable to take the full amount of formula?
3. Do you have nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea?

If you answer “yes” to any of these questions, please contact the dietitian.

Keep a weekly record of your weight.

Date	Weight	Date	Weight

Hydration

Staying well-hydrated will help you feel better. Your tube feed formula will provide some fluid, but you will also need to flush your tube with extra water to prevent dehydration. These tips will help you get the water your body needs.

It is important to take all your water flushes to keep your body well-hydrated.

Flush your tube with water before and after each feeding.

You will need more water if you notice any of these signs:

- Feeling thirsty (this is the first sign of dehydration)
- Headache
- Decreased urine output (less pee)
- Urine is dark in color or has strong, smelly odour
- Dry, sticky mouth
- Cracked lips
- Dry skin
- Reduced skin turgor (skin that does not bounce back quickly when pinched on the back of the hand or forearm)
- Dizziness or light-headedness
- Tiredness
- Muscle weakness

Try these tips to increase your water (fluid) intake:

- Add 500 mL (2 cups) of water to your feeding bag and let it run through your tube.
- Double the amount of water you usually flush through your tube. For example, if you usually flush 50 mL, then flush with 100 mL.
- **Do not** mix water or other liquids with your formula. It may delay you from getting the nutrition your body needs.
- If you are able to drink liquids, then try to drink until you no longer feel thirsty.

Call your doctor if you have any of the following signs:

- Extreme thirst
- No urination for 8 to 12 hours
- Confusion
- Increased drowsiness
- Seizures
- Uncontrolled high blood sugars

Diarrhea

Diarrhea means frequent, loose, watery bowel movements.

Diarrhea may be caused by:

- Your medication.
- Running your formula at a fast rate.
- A highly concentrated formula.
- Intolerance to your formula or something you have eaten.
- Bacteria in your formula or feeding equipment.
- Bowel problems.

Follow these tips if you have diarrhea:

- Flush the tube with an extra 250 mL of water for each loose bowel movement you have. It is important that you replace the water that you are losing.
- Slow down the rate of your feed and run it over a longer time. If this does not work, then try a different formula.
- If you are taking a formula without fibre, then try slowly changing to a formula with fibre. This may help to form stools.
- Replace one can of fibre-free formula with one can of a high fibre formula daily, until bowel movements are normal.

- If you are already taking a formula with fibre, then you may find it helpful to use a fibre-free formula.
- If you are using a concentrated formula, then try a less concentrated one. Examples of concentrated formulas include Resource® 2.0 or TwoCal® HN.
- Ask your dietitian for help with changing formulas.
- Take your formula out of the fridge about 30 minutes before use. Cold formulas can cause stomach/bowel discomfort.

Changing your diet can help with diarrhea if you are able to eat. Tips:

- Antibiotics can cause diarrhea. If you are taking antibiotics and you can eat, then try foods with probiotics, such as yogurt.
- Foods with soluble fibre can also help. Try oatmeal or applesauce, rice, pasta, or potato.
- Cut back on caffeinated beverages. Try decaf coffee or chamomile tea instead.
- Avoid high fat, greasy foods especially fried foods or foods with cream sauces.
- Avoid eating high fibre foods like whole grains, raw fruits, and raw vegetables.
- Avoid gassy foods like lentils, kidney beans, and chickpeas.
- Try not eating milk products, or choosing low lactose milk. Yogurt and cheese are usually better tolerated (easier on your system).

Medications you are taking may cause diarrhea.

- Stop taking laxatives and stool softeners.
- Ask your pharmacist or doctor about your pills. Taking **liquid medications** may cause diarrhea.

Call your doctor if you have moderate diarrhea for more than 5 days or severe diarrhea for more than 12 – 24 hours.

If diarrhea continues after trying the above tips, then try using liquid pectin.

- **Check with your dietitian first before using it.**
- You can buy liquid pectin (Certo®) in grocery stores.
- Mix 30 mL of liquid pectin with 50 mL of warm water. Flush this down your tube. Flush with another 50 mL of water to make sure the tube is clean.
- Do not do this at the same time as you would take your medication.
- You can use this 2 times per day.

Constipation

Constipation means fewer than 3 bowel movements each week or stool that is hard and difficult to pass.

Constipation may be caused by:

- Not enough fluid
- Not enough fibre
- Your pills/liquid medicines
- Inactivity
- Poor movement of your bowels

Are you flushing the right amount of water through your tube? Do you feel thirsty?

- If you are able to drink, then try to drink more. Most people need at least 2 litres (8 cups) of fluid each day.
- Make sure you are flushing your tube with the right amount of water. Check your feeding schedule for the amount of water you need.
- Try increasing the amount of water you flush through your tube.

Are you active?

Try doing some light activity, like walking, after taking your feeds, if you are able.

Does your feed have fibre in it?

- Try changing to a feed which contains fibre. Ask your dietitian for help with this.
- Replace one can of fibre-free feed with one can of high fibre feed daily, until bowel movements are normal.
- If you increase the fibre in your feeds, then you may need to flush with more water.
- You can also try flushing your tube with 125 mL (1/2 cup) of prune juice once or twice a day. Flush your feeding tube with water before and after having prune juice.

Has your doctor given you a stool softener or laxative?

- › Take this medication as your doctor recommended.

If you are able to eat, then choose foods high in fibre.

- › Try high fibre cereals, whole grain bread products, fruits and vegetables.

Contact your doctor if you have not had a bowel movement for several days and if you are having severe abdominal bloating, cramping, or vomiting.

Nausea and vomiting

If you have a small amount of nausea, stomach pain, bloating or cramping, then you usually do not have to stop your tube feeding.

It is common to feel nauseous in the early morning, especially if you are taking feeds at night. You need time to adjust to waking up with a full stomach.

If you are vomiting, then you should stop your feed.

Call your doctor if vomiting continues for more than 12 hours.

Nausea and vomiting may be caused by:

- A fast rate of feeding
- Lying flat while feeding
- Displaced feeding tube
- Taking a large amount of formula
- Some medications
- Cold formula
- Difficulty digesting your feed
- Anxiety

Are you running your feed too fast?

- › Build up to your goal rate very slowly.
- › If nausea develops, then reduce the rate to the last rate tolerated.

Are you lying down after taking your feeds?

- › Do not lie down flat while your feed is running.
- › Sit upright when taking your feed and for at least 30 minutes after.
- › If you are not able to sit upright, then raise the head of your bed to at least a 30° angle.
- › Wait 30 minutes after your feed has stopped before being very active.

Does it feel like your tube has moved?

- › If you think your tube may have moved, then contact your doctor.

Have you recently switched to bolus feeding?

- › It may take time to adjust to the new faster rate.
- › It may help to reduce the amount of formula taken at one time and gradually work up to the goal amount over time.

Have your pills been changed?

- › If your doctor has given you anti-nausea pills, then take them 30-60 minutes before starting your tube feeding.

Is your formula cold when you are taking it?

- › Cold feeds are harder on your stomach.
- › Take your feeds out of the fridge about 30 minutes before use.

Are you constipated?

- › You may not be getting enough water. Increase your water flushes.
- › Take stool softeners or laxatives only if your doctor has prescribed them.
- › Try flushing 1/2 cup of prune juice through your tube twice a day. Flush with water before and after.
- › You may need to change to a formula with fibre. Call your dietitian for help with this.

Are you feeling anxious or worried?

- › Try to relax when taking your feeds.
- › If your doctor has prescribed anti-anxiety pills, then take them before starting your tube feeding.
- › Remove bad smells before starting your tube feeding.

Avoid foods that may cause nausea, if you are able to eat them, such as:

- Spicy foods
- High fat foods

Blocked feeding tube

If your formula does not run through the tube, or if you cannot flush the tube with water or pills, then your tube may be blocked.

A blocked tube may be caused by:

- Not flushing enough water through your tube after each feeding.
- Large pills that have not been crushed well.
- An old tube.
- A kinked or twisted feeding tube.
- Putting items other than formula, water, or pills through the tube.

Tube blockages can usually be prevented by adequate flushing.

What to do if your tube is blocked:

- Do not force formula or pills into a clogged tube.
- Check to make sure your tube clamp is open.
- Try to flush your tube with 50-60 mL of warm water using a 60 mL syringe.
- Insert the tip of the syringe into your tube and use a back and forth motion with the plunger of the syringe.
- If the tube is still clogged, then try **sodium bicarbonate tablets** and **cotazyme capsules**. You can get these at your local pharmacy with a

prescription from your doctor.

- Crush 1 sodium bicarbonate tablet into a powder.
- Mix contents of 1 cotazyme capsule with the sodium bicarbonate. Do not inhale the powder from the cotazyme.
- Add 5 mL of warm water to the mixture of powder and stir until it is dissolved.
- Draw up the mixture into a syringe and flush it into your tube, clamp your tube, wait approximately 10-15 minutes, then flush your tube with 20-30 mL of warm water.
- If it is still clogged, then repeat this 2 more times.

When was your tube inserted? Is it old?

- › It may be time to change your tubing.

Have you put anything lumpy into your tube?

- › Only tube feeding, well-crushed medications and water should go through your tube. Make sure to flush your tube after medications to make sure it has gone through.
- › If your tube stays clogged, then call your family doctor or visit your local Emergency Department.

If you have any questions, please ask.

We are here to help you.

When to call your doctor

- If you have a chest infection, or need to cough a lot when you are having feeds. This could mean the formula is going down the wrong way.
- You have a high fever.
- There is inflammation, swelling, pain, redness, oozing, or leakage around your tube site.
- You have moderate diarrhea for more than 5 days.
- You have severe diarrhea for more than 2 days.
- You have vomiting for more than 12-24 hours.
- Your feeding tube comes partially or completely out.
- The following symptoms do not go away:
 - › Constipation
 - › Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach)
 - › Stomach bloating

Contact information

Dietitian: _____

Phone number: _____

