

Care After Having a Gastrostomy or Gastrojejunostomy Tube Inserted

General Information

In order to place a tube into your stomach, your health care provider has made a hole (insertion site) into your abdomen. It is normal to have a little soreness or tenderness at the insertion site. This should get better each day.

Purpose of the Tube

- Tube for decompression or drainage:** The tube should be connected to a drainage system. Follow your health care provider's instructions.
- Gastrostomy tube for feeding:** Medicines and feedings may begin 6 hours after the tube is placed if you have no fever or abdominal pain.
- Gastrojejunostomy tube:** Medicines are given through the gastric port and can start 6 hours after the tube is placed. Feedings may begin 6 hours after the tube is placed if you have no fever or abdominal pain.
- Replacement of an existing tube:** Feedings and medicines may begin right away.

Activity

- Have someone drive you home.
- You should have someone stay with you or be available to help you for 12 hours after the procedure.
- Rest for the remainder of the day.
- Do not lift anything heavier than 10 pounds for 24 hours after procedure.

Your Tube

Type: _____

Stoma length: _____

Size: _____

Date placed: _____

- Do not exercise for 24 hours after the procedure.
- You can may return to your normal activities tomorrow.
- You may take a shower. For the first 48 hours, cover the dressing when taking a shower.
- Do not take a tub bath.
- Do not swim or submerge yourself in water.

Diet

- You may have clear liquids 4 hours after the tube placement. Then return to your normal diet.
- You may use the gastric port of your tube to take your medicine 6 hours after the tube is placed, or you may swallow your medicine with sips of water.
- If this is a replacement of an existing tube, you may eat, drink and take your medicines right away.

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Medicine Use with Gastrostomy Tubes

- Crush pills and mix with 60 milliliters (mL) of water or use liquid from your gastrostomy tube.
- Do not put crushed medicines in jejunal tubes. Use only liquid medicines.
- Flush the tube with 60 mL of tap water after all your medicines are given.
- Give only one medicine at a time. Clamp the tube for 1 hour after all your medicines are given.

Care of the Tube/Stoma Site

- Wash your hands with soap and water before handling any formula or equipment.
- Flush the tube with 60 mL of tap water before and after each use.
- Do not use oil-based products at the tube insertion site. This may cause the balloon that holds the tube in place to rupture and the tube will slide out.
- Keep the tube insertion site clean and dry. Clean the site every day with soap and water.
- Clamping of the tube over and over in the same location may weaken the tube.
- You may use an abdominal binder if your health care providers says it is OK. Keep it on for 72 hours.

How to Change the Dressing

Change your dressing every day or sooner if soiled or wet.

- Wash your hands.
- Wash your hands. Gently clean around the tube with mild soap and water. Be sure to clean under the bolster (tube holder). Rinse and pat dry.
- Cut a 2-inch slit into the center of the 4-inch by 4-inch gauze sponge. Place the sponge around the tube and on top of the tube holder.
- Apply another 4-inch by 4-inch gauze sponge over the tubing. Be careful not to kink the tubing.
- Tape the dressing in place like a frame.

When to Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if:

- you have pain, redness, swelling, leaking of gastric contents, or bleeding around the tube
- you have chills or a temperature of 100.5 F or higher
- you have abdominal pain or vomiting (throwing up)
- the tube comes out
- the tube is clogged for more than 6 hours
- you have any questions or concerns.