

The ROYAL MARSDEN

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Caring for your radiologically inserted gastrostomy (RIG) tube

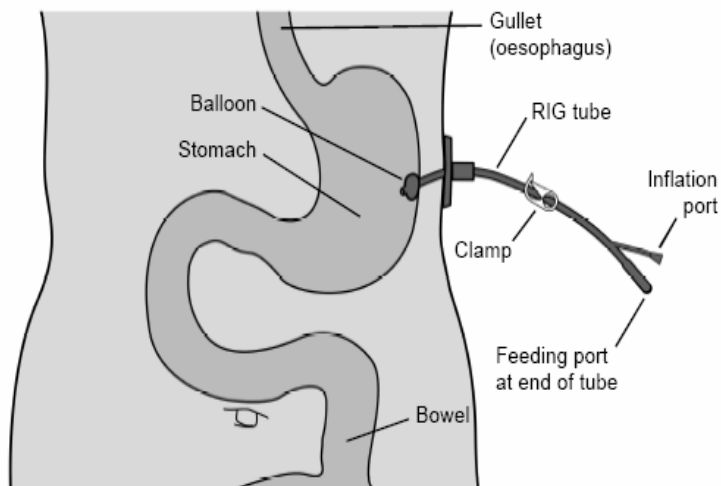
Rehabilitation Department

Patient Information



NHS

This booklet aims to provide you with information about your radiologically inserted gastrostomy (RIG) feeding tube and to answer any questions you may have.



How do I care for my tube each day in the first two weeks after placement?

- **Always** wash your hands with soap and water and dry them before caring for the tube
- While the stoma site is healing, do not soak in water (for example, do not have baths, but shower instead)
- Clean the skin around the stoma site with warm water and soap, cleaning gently from the site outwards in a circular motion
- Clean the tube and external retention device - dry the area gently with a clean towel and ensure the area is completely dry
- The tube must be flushed with 60ml of water before and after giving feed and medications. This is to prevent the tube from getting blocked.

If there is any sign of infection (redness, oozing, pain), please let your district or nutrition nurse know - they can recommend appropriate treatment. It is usual to have a small amount of leakage of stomach secretions. However, if you are concerned, please contact your dietitian.

If you experience pain on feeding, prolonged or severe pain following your procedure, fresh bleeding, or external leakage of gastric contents, stop the feed immediately, and contact member of your medical team or dietitian.

Care of your feeding tube after two weeks

You may have stitches either side of the tube entry site that hold the stomach wall close to the skin on the abdomen. They should be removed 10-14 days after the tube was inserted. If they have not been removed, please let your community nurse or keyworker know.

After two weeks when the stoma site has healed, you can bathe as normal. However, ensure that the area around the tube is dried thoroughly afterwards.

Rotate the tube at least once a week to prevent the tube adhering (sticking) to the stomach. This can be done by turning the tube 360°, then gently pulling the tube back to its original position and placing the external retention device back to its original position.

Fit the external retention device so that it lies 2-3mm from the skin surface. The retention device may need to be loosened or tightened as you gain or lose weight.

Make sure you clamp your tube at different points along its length to avoid damaging the tube.

Some discolouration of the tube is normal and does not affect its ability to deliver feeds.

The feeding tube usually stays in place for three to six months at which point it can be replaced with a similar tube or removed if it is no longer required.

Can I administer medications down my feeding tube?

Please ensure that your medication is prescribed in a soluble or liquid form and check with your doctor or pharmacist that all medications are suitable to be given via your tube.

The tube must be flushed with at least 30ml of water before and after giving any medication. This is to prevent the tube from getting blocked.

How do I check the water in my balloon?

The feeding tube is held in the stomach by a balloon filled with cool boiled water.

You should check the volume of the balloon weekly to ensure that there is sufficient fluid in the balloon. We will provide training so that you can carry out the following procedures:

- Pre-fill a 5ml luer slip syringe with cool boiled water
- Hold the tube in place during the procedure and ensure that it remains in the stomach
- Use another 5ml luer slip syringe to withdraw the water in the balloon
- Write down the volume drawn out
- Replace with the recommended volume with the pre-filled syringe.

If you notice that there is no water in the balloon or that stomach contents are coming through into the syringe, the balloon may have burst. The tube will need to be replaced. Tape the tube to your stomach and contact your dietitian, key worker or doctor immediately.

What should I do if the tube is blocked?

- Gently flush the tube with warm water using a 60ml syringe
- If you can visibly see where the tube is blocked, massage the

tube with your fingers or put a warm compression on it to help break up the blockage

- If the tube remains blocked, gently draw back on the syringe and attempt to flush as before - it can take more than 30 minutes to unblock the tube so be patient
- If unsuccessful, contact your key worker, nurse or dietitian.

What should I do if the tube falls out?

Please ensure that you always have a spare tube at home. Your dietitian will supply this via the home delivery company.

You will need to have a new tube inserted as soon as possible as the tract will close within a few hours if no tube is in place.

Put a dry clean dressing over the hole to prevent stomach contents leaking onto your skin or clothes.

Contact your key worker, dietitian, nutrition nurse or doctor **immediately**.

After office hours and during weekends, please go to your local Accident and Emergency Unit **immediately** and take your spare tube with you.

Once the new tube has been inserted, do not use it until it has been confirmed that it is in the correct place.

How do I look after my feeding equipment?

Giving sets

You need to change the giving set every 24 hours.

If you are giving more than one feed a day, it is important that the giving set is stored correctly between feeds to keep it as clean as possible. When you have finished a feed, place the empty bottle with the giving set still attached in a plastic bag in the fridge, such as a supermarket carrier bag. At the time of your next feed, disconnect the giving set from the empty bottle and immediately attach it to the new feed bottle. Throw away

the old, empty feed bottle. This applies to both gravity feeds and feeds taken via a pump.

Repeat this process at the end of each feed and remember to throw away the giving set at the end of the day.

Syringes

When you are at home your..... is responsible for supplying you with syringes.

Reusable syringes are used for flushing water and medication down the tube.

Some people will also use syringes to give feed down the tube (bolus feeding).

Each reusable syringe can be used 30 times and for most people the syringe will last one week (4 uses per day).

Between each use the following procedure should be followed to clean the syringe:

- Clean immediately after each administration using fresh, warm soapy water (domestic washing-up liquid)
- The plunger should be removed to allow for thorough cleaning
- Other approved cleaning methods include dishwasher (top uppermost), immersion in boiling water (3 minutes), cold sterilising solution (as per manufacturer's instructions) and microwave steam-steriliser (as per manufacturer's instructions)
- Allow to air dry (parts still separate)
- Once dry, store in a clean, dry container
- Only reassemble the syringe prior to use

Please discuss with your dietitian if your supply of syringes is not adequate.

Pump

It is important to keep your pump clean. Before cleaning, ensure you unplug it from the wall.

Clean using a damp cloth. Wipe any spillage as soon as possible. Stubborn stains may be removed using mild detergent and warm water.

Do not, under any circumstances, immerse the main body of the pump in water.

If you have any questions about your feed or equipment, please ask your dietitian, feeding company or district nurse.

Contact details

If the skin around the tube becomes red, sore, or there is oozing from the site, please contact your nurse or GP.

If you experience symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea or abdominal distension, contact your keyworker, doctor or dietitian immediately.

Useful contacts

Hospital Dietitian

Community Dietitian

District Nurse/ Community Nurse

Nutrition Feed Company

Nutrition Feed Company Nurse Advisor

Key Worker

Sources of information and support

PINNT

A support group for patients receiving artificial nutrition

www.pinnt.com/Home.aspx

Macmillan Cancer Support

Macmillan Cancer Support is a British charity that provides specialist health care, information and financial support to people affected by cancer.

www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/coping/side-effects-and-symptoms/eating-problems/types-of-nutritional-support.html

Cancer Research UK

Cancer Research UK is a cancer research and awareness charity.

www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/coping-with-cancer/coping-physically/diet/managing/drip-or-tube-feeding

Notes and questions

References

This booklet is evidence based wherever the appropriate evidence is available, and represents an accumulation of expert opinion and professional interpretation.

Details of the references used in writing this booklet are available on request from:

The Royal Marsden Help Centre

Freephone: 0800 783 7176

Email: patientcentre@rmh.nhs.uk

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Should you require information in an alternative format, please contact The Royal Marsden Help Centre.



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