

The ROYAL MARSDEN

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Caring for your nasojejunal (NJ) tube

Rehabilitation Department

Patient Information

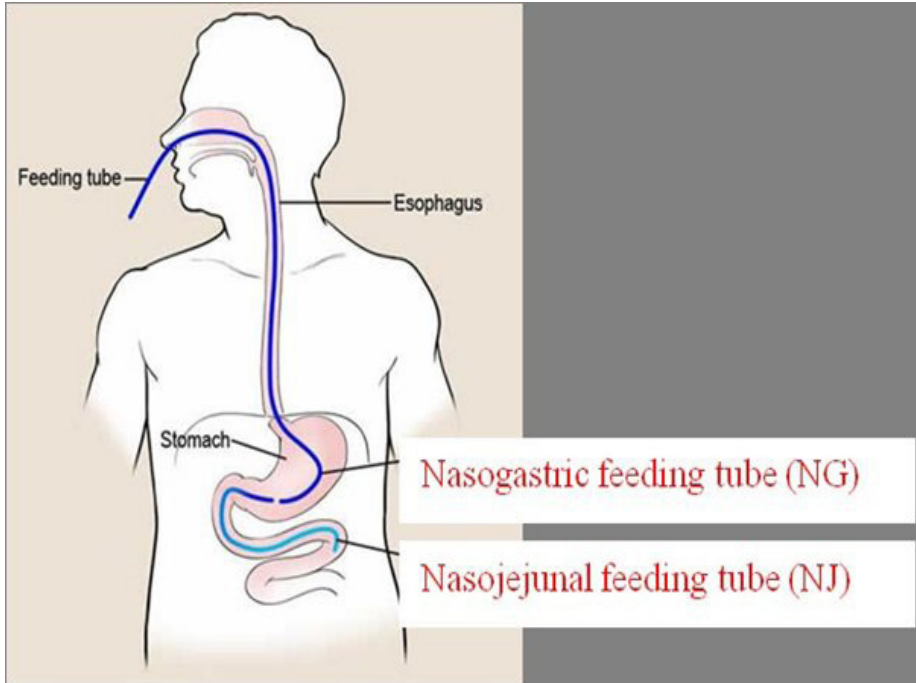


NHS

What is a nasojeunal (NJ) tube?

You are being fed through a NJ tube, which is positioned from your nose, past your stomach and down into the jejunum (your small intestine).

This booklet provides information about your NJ feeding tube and answers questions which you may have.



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How do I prepare for feeding?

Always wash your hands with soap and water and dry them before handling the tube.

Do not put water, feed or medication through the tube until you have checked that the tube is in the correct position.

Why is it important to check the position of the NJ tube?

It is important to check the position of the tube to make sure the end is still in the small intestine. All tubes have measurement marks on them and you should be aware of the measurement point at which it leaves your nostril.

Length of tube (measurement mark at entry into nose)

=cm

If this moves, call your key worker, nurse or dietitian to check if it is still safe to use the tube.

When should I check the position of the NJ tube?

- Before giving a feed
- Before giving medicine down the tube
- After you have vomited, retched or had a severe coughing bout
- If the tube looks longer or the tapes holding it in place have come loose
- If the tube is accidentally pulled or tugged
- At least once a day.

General care

To prevent unnecessary replacement of your NJ, it is important to keep the tube in good condition. Regular care and flushing of the tube will help to prevent the tube becoming blocked.

The external part of the tube can be cleaned with soap and water. Some discoloration of the tube is normal and does not affect its ability to deliver feed.

Check your nose for redness and any dry, sore or cracked areas. Change the tape securing the tube to the nose if it becomes dirty or starts to peel off. Contact the doctor or district nurse if any of these symptoms occur.

Wash the rest of your face in your usual way.

Flush the tube every 4-6 hours if feeding is not in progress. Use either sterile water or cooled, boiled water to flush the tube as directed by your dietitian.

Can I administer medications down my NJ tube?

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

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

What do I do if my tube becomes blocked?

If you are confident that the tube is still in the correct position, for example, the tube becomes blocked immediately post finishing feeds, try to flush the tube using warm water using 50ml enteral syringe.

If you can visibly see where the tube is blocked, massage the tube with your fingers and thumbs 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.

Do not attempt to unblock or administer anything down the tube, if you are unsure if the tube is in the correct position. Instead, call one of the contacts below.

What do I do if my tube falls out?

If your tube has partially come out, slowly pull the remainder of the NJ tube out so the whole tube is fully out.

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

If it is after office hours or during the weekend, please go to your local Accident and Emergency Unit. If you have a spare tube, take this with you as this will save time. If you do not have a spare tube, then take the tube which has fallen out so the staff can identify which type of tube is required.

How long can my tube stay in place?

The tube should be replaced as recommended in the manufacturer's guidelines. This will be done by your managing hospital.

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.

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

Your dietitian will let you know whether your syringes will be single use or reusable.

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 of the reusable syring, please follow the instructions below 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 (tip 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 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.

General

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

Contact details

Hospital Dietitian

Community Dietitian

District Nurse/ Community Nurse

Nutrition Feed Company

Nutrition Feed Company Nurse Advisor

Key Worker

Further information and support

PINNT

A support group for patients receiving artificial nutrition

www.pinnt.com/Home.aspx

Macmillan Cancer Support

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

Cancer Research UK

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

Nutricia Flocare Infinity pump

www.nutriciaflocare.com/infinity_simulator.php

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

No conflicts of interest were declared in the production of this booklet.

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



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