

# How to administer enteral nutrition using a syringe with plunger

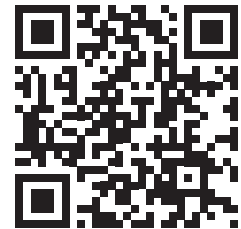
## Supplies needed for infusion

- ☐ 60 ml syringe
- ☐ Feeding formula and container
- ☐ Water and container
- ☐ Clean towel or paper towels

## Start infusion

1. Wash your hands with warm soapy water for at least 20 seconds and dry thoroughly.
2. Clean your work area using a cleaning wipe or soap and water or lay down a clean towel to place supplies on.
3. Sit up at a 30° to 90° angle for feeding and then stay at a 30° to 45° angle for a minimum of 30 minutes after feeding.
4. Pour the amount of water needed into a container.
5. Shake the formula and wipe the lid off before opening.
6. Pour the correct amount of formula into a container.
7. Assess placement of the feeding tube as instructed.

**Training video  
available!**



Scan the QR code using the camera  
on your smart phone or tablet to  
watch a quick instructional video.

# How to administer enteral nutrition using a syringe with plunger

8. Bolus feeding using a syringe with plunger (you control rate of flush and feeding by pushing the plunger).
  - a. Insert 60 ml syringe into the water container and pull up the amount of water needed to flush.
  - b. Open the feeding cap, insert the syringe into the feeding tube at an angle, open clamp on tube (if present) and gently push the syringe plunger to allow water to slowly flush through the tube. Always flush with the ordered amount of water, which may require more than one syringe of water.
  - c. Insert the syringe into the formula contained and pull the plunger back to get formula. Insert the syringe into the feeding tube and gently push the plunger to receive the ordered amount of formula.
  - d. After feeding, flush the feeding tube with desired amount of water again, once complete, remove syringe, close cap on the end of feeding tube, and close clamp on tube (if present).
9. Pull the syringe plunger apart from syringe and wash with warm soapy water and air dry.

**Notes:**

- Syringes can be washed and reused for up to 1 week, then discard and use a new syringe.
- Any unused formula should be stored in the refrigerator for up to 48 hours.

# Taking medications through your feeding tube

## 1. Gather supplies:

- ✓ Medications
- ✓ Pill crusher or something to crush pills
- ✓ 60 ml syringe
- ✓ Cup of warm water

## 2. If the medication is in a pill form

- Crush the pill into powder form
- Mix well with 10-20 ml of warm water

## 3. If the medication is in a capsule form

- Open the capsule
- Empty the contents into 10-20 ml warm water and mix well

## 4. If the medication is in a granular form

- Dilute the medication
- Flush the tube immediately after the medication with 50 ml warm water
- The granulates may clog the tube

## Special tips:

- Give each medication separately
- Flush with 20-30 ml of water before and after each medication
- Do NOT mix medications
- Do NOT add the uncrushed medication directly into the feeding tube or feeding bag
- Do NOT crush any enteric coated, time released, or effervescent (bubbling) medications
- Consult with your doctor or retail pharmacists to see if any of your medications are available in liquid form or what other options are available to you.

# Feeding tube site care

## Steps to clean the feeding tube site:

1. Wash your hands
2. Prepare clean work surface to gather your supplies
3. Gather supplies needed to clean your feeding tube site:
  - ✓ Antibacterial soap
  - ✓ Clean washcloth
  - ✓ Cotton-tipped swabs or Q-tips
  - ✓ Warm water
  - ✓ Clean dry towel
4. Gently wash the skin starting at the tube site and work out in a circle
5. If there is a disk, gently clean under it with a soapy washcloth or cotton swab
6. Rinse well with warm water
7. Pat dry and dry completely

## Special tips:

- Do not use ointment or hydrogen peroxide around the tube site
- Change the bandage or split gauze daily until the site has healed and there is no leakage, then you no longer need the gauze unless it provides you comfort
- If you have a G-tube, gently rotate the skin disk and/or pull a little on the tube. It should be able to move about ¼ inch. If it is too tight to move in and out, call your doctor.
- Never pull or rotate a J-tube
- If you experience any of the following, call your doctor:
  - Pain
  - Bleeding
  - More redness and tenderness than usual
  - Excessive drawing or fluid leaking around the tube
  - Foul smelling drainage
  - Clogged feeding tube
- If the tube comes out of place
  - Do NOT use the tube if the tube is partially out of place
  - Tape the tube to prevent any further movement
  - See your doctor as soon as possible or go to the Emergency Room

# Feeding tube site care

## Preventing and treating clogs:

### How do I know if my feeding tube is clogged?

- ✓ Difficulty pushing water through the feeding tube using a syringe
- ✓ Not able to pull back formula from the tube using an empty syringe
- ✓ Feeding pump alarming
- ✓ Formula leaking from the feeding tube site

### How do I unclog my feeding tube?

1. Wash your hands
2. Gather a cup of warm water
3. Visually inspect feeding tube for any blockage
4. Using a 60ml syringe, pull up 30 ml warm water
5. Push with 30ml of water through the syringe into to feeding tube, if resistance is met, pull back on plunger and try flushing again
6. Repeat the above step as needed, but avoid forcing water into the feeding tube
7. If the tube remains clogged, contact your doctor or go to the emergency room

### Special tips:

- Use warm water 1st to unclog your feeding tube
- If you cannot unclog the feeding tube, use 1 sodium bicarbonate tablet and open 1 pancreatic enzyme from the retail pharmacy (doctor prescription is needed). Mix together in 5-10 ml of warm water
- Gently push the mixture through the tube to allow it to sit for 10 minutes to 1 hour, then attempt flushing the feeding tube with 60 ml warm water
- NEVER put a wire or any sharp objects into the feeding tube
- If the tube remains clogged, contact your doctor or go to the emergency room