Let's Talk ABOUT...

Gavage (guh-VAHJ) feeding is a way to give your baby formula directly into his stomach. A tube is placed through your baby's nose or mouth to your baby's stomach. The purpose is to put formula into your child's stomach. The tube in the nose is a

The tube in the mouth is an **orogastric** (or-oh-GAS-trick) or OG tube.

nasogastric (nay-zow-GAS-trick) or NG tube.

Why does my baby need gavage feeding?

Gavage feedings are for babies who cannot get enough nutrition with just bottle or breast feedings. Gavage feedings may supply all your child's nutrition needs or be added to bottle or breast feedings.

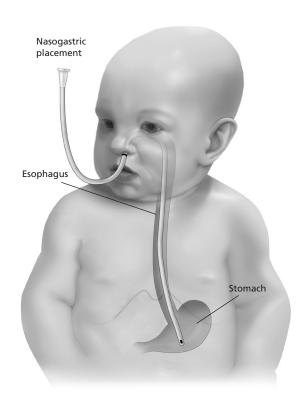
Gavage feedings may be used for:

- Babies who are premature and too small or weak to suck enough from the breast or bottle.
- Babies who have a problem coordinating their suck and swallow, or do not have a good "gag" reflex.
- Babies who have a problem with their throat, esophagus, or bowel.
- Babies who have lung problems and are breathing too hard or too fast to be able to suck and swallow.

What equipment do I need?

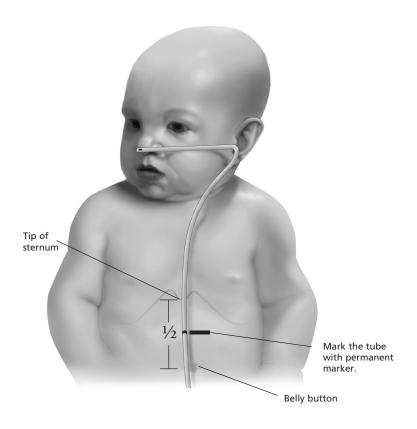
- The correct size feeding tube
- Syringe to check stomach contents 20-30 cc
- Syringe for formula (30-50 cc)
- Tape
- Lubricating Jelly® or sterile water
- Suction bulb
- Permanent marker

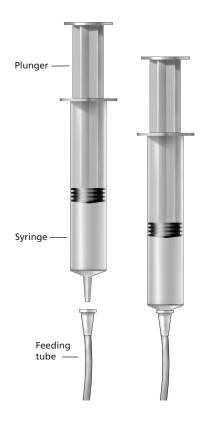
Gavage feeding



How do I place (insert) a feeding tube?

- **1.** Measure and mark the correct length of tubing as described to the right:
 - If you put the tube through your baby's nose, measure the tube distance from the nose to the earlobe, then from the earlobe to midway between the lower tip of the sternum and the belly button (see illustration on the following page). Mark the tube with the permanent marker.
 - If you put the tube through your baby's mouth, measure the tube distance from the mouth to the earlobe, then from the earlobe to the lower tip of the sternum (see the illustration on the following page). Mark the tube with the permanent marker.





- **2.** Moisten the end of the tube with lubricating jelly or water. Slowly insert the tube through the nose or mouth until the mark you put on the tube is at the nose or mouth.
- **3.** Gently tape the tube to your child's cheek.
- **4.** Check that the tube is in the right place:
 - **a.** Attach the 20-30 cc syringe to the end of the feeding tube.
 - **b.** Pull the plunger back to check for stomach contents. Return the stomach contents into the stomach. **Note:** If you withdraw stomach contents (such as old formula), it is very likely that the tube is in the stomach.
 - **c.** Watch your child for any signs of respiratory distress. If the tube is not in the right place, your child may have more trouble breathing.

How do I give my baby a bolus feeding?

A bolus feeding is a feeding is given over a short period of time. First make sure the tube is in the stomach (see above).

- 1. Position your child comfortably for the feeding. Whenever possible, hold your child during the feeding. If this is not possible, place her on her right side with the head of the bed lifted up. Never leave your child alone while bolus feeding!
- **2.** Flush the tube with 3 to 5 cc of water.
- **3.** Remove the plunger from the 30-50 cc syringe and attach the syringe to the end of the tube. Everything should be as warm as room temperature or warmer (if you give your baby cold liquid, he may have stomach cramps).
- **4.** Add formula to the syringe, and apply slight pressure with the plunger (just to start the feeding), then remove the plunger.
- **5.** Let the feeding go in to the stomach by gravity by raising the syringe 8 to 12 inches above your baby's head. The feeding should take about 15 to 20 minutes.
- **6.** When the feeding is finished, clear the tube by putting 3 to 5 cc of water in the syringe and

- letting the water run in to the stomach. Try not to put extra air into the stomach.
- **7.** Burp your baby after the feeding. Place your child on her right side or hold her upright after feeding.

How do I give a continuous feeding?

A continuous feeding is one that is given all the time. First make sure the tube is in the stomach (see above).

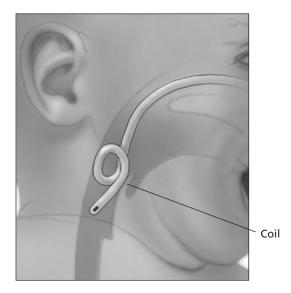
- **1.** Set up the feeding pump according to the pump's directions and give the feeding as you were instructed.
- **2.** Flush the feeding tube with 3 to 5 cc of water every four hours. Do this by pushing the water through the tube with a syringe.
- **3.** Change the feeding bag every 24 hours and add no more than eight hours of formula in the bag at a time.

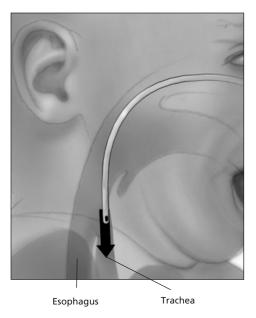
How long can the feeding tube stay in my baby?

- The feeding tube may be left in place for one month.
- If the tube comes out before one month, check the end of the tube:
 - If the end is soft, rinse the tube and put the tube back in.
 - If the end is hard, put a new tube in.

How do I give medicine through the feeding tube?

- **1.** Check that the tube is in the stomach.
- **2.** Flush the with 3 to 5 cc of water.
- **3.** Attach a syringe without plunger, place medicine into the syringe, and allow the medicine to go in the stomach by gravity. Some medicines may need to be thinned with water.
- **4.** After the medicine has flowed into the feeding tube, flush with 3 to 5 cc of water.





Are there any possible problems with gavage feedings?

The most common problem with gavage feeding is a tube that is not placed properly. The tube may be coiled in the back of the throat, or it may not be all the way into the stomach (see the illustrations to the right).

Some ways you know the tube may not be placed correctly might be that your baby may do the following:

Cough

- Fight the tube
- Have a blue tint to his skin
- Stop breathing

What do I do if my baby has a problem?

If your baby begins to vomit, stops breathing, or turns blue during the feeding, do the following:

- **1.** Stop the feeding.
- **2.** Remove the gavage tube, pinch the tube closed while you remove the tube to prevent formula from flowing into the windpipe.
- **3.** Suction your baby's nose and mouth with the suction bulb.
- **4.** Stimulate your baby to cry.
- **5.** If your baby continues to vomit or does not breath, call 911.

Helpful hints

Give your baby a pacifier to suck on during feedings. This will help satisfy her need to suck and help her connect feeding with sucking.

If your baby cries hard during the feeding, the formula may not go down the tube. Stop the feeding and calm your baby then continue feeding.

When you feed your baby formula through the gavage tube, do not apply pressure with the plunger to make it go faster. If you feed your baby thicker formula, the flow will be slower and may need slight pressure to get all of the feeding in. Hold the syringe higher to increase the flow.

Touch and talk to your baby during the feeding. If possible, hold your baby during the feeding. Afterward, pick your child up to burp him and to and cuddle with you. Interact with your baby as you would with any other baby.

If you have further questions or problems, contact your doctor.

