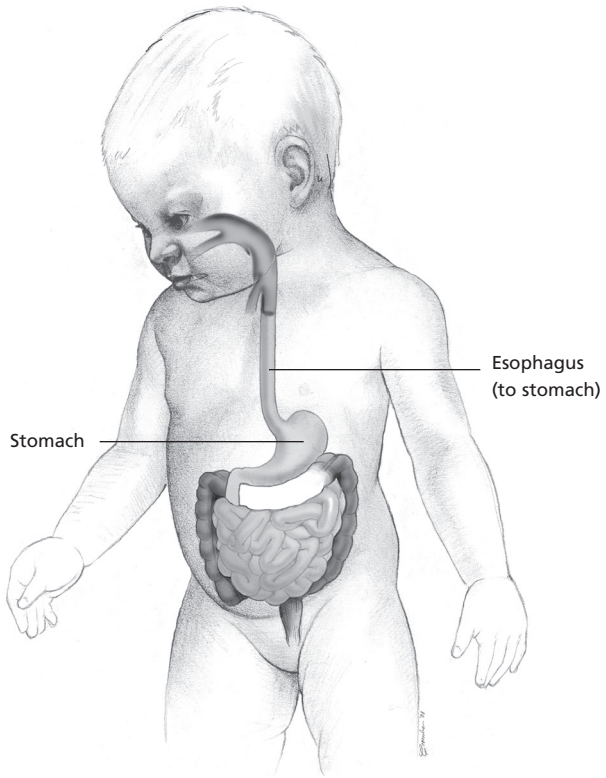
Let's Talk About...

Gastrostomy tubes



A gastrostomy tube is a way to feed a child if they are not able to take enough food by regular feedings or meals. One of these is a **gastrostomy** (gaa-STRAW-stow-me) **tube** or "G-tube". Your child may receive a gastrostomy tube if she needs help with feedings for more than 30 days. A gastrostomy is put in place by a surgeon. This tube goes from the skin of the belly to the stomach. The surgeon makes a makes a small hole from outside the belly into the stomach and puts a tube into the opening. The opening is called a stoma (STOW-mah). The tube stays there and your child can get food through the tube.

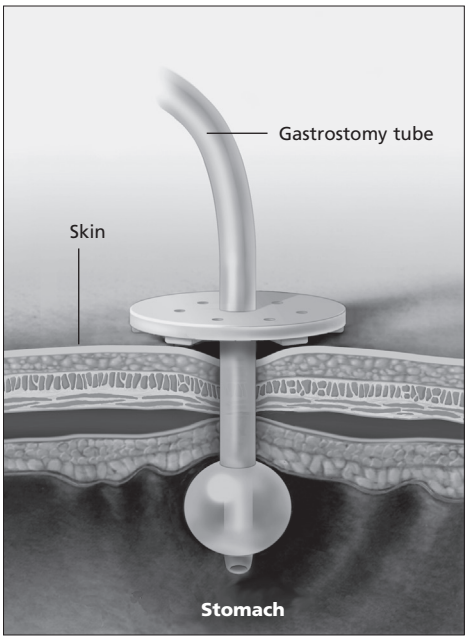
Why would a child need a gastrostomy and how does it work?

Usually, food and drink pass through the mouth, down the throat, and into the stomach. The energy needed to grow comes from the food we eat and drink.

Children with problems such as birth defects, severe reflux (frequent vomiting after feedings), brain damage, or injury to the esophagus may not be able to eat enough to grow. These children may need a different way to eat. A G-tube is a way to get liquid food right into the stomach. The G-tube will help your child keep a healthy weight. Food is placed in the tube and goes right into the stomach. With a G-tube, feedings can be given slowly all the time or feedings can be spaced out at regularly scheduled times.

Is my child's G-tube permanent?

Each child is different. When your child can eat all her feedings on her own, the tube can come out. This is usually done without surgery. However, some children will always have the tube.



Can my child swim or bathe?

Do not get the g-tube site wet for the first few weeks. After your child's surgery site heals completely, she can swim and bathe.

Can I still feed my child by mouth?

Each child is different. Some children can eat food by mouth (along with G-tube feedings), and some cannot. Talk to your child's doctor to see if feeding by mouth is possible for your child.

How will I learn what to do with my child's G-tube?

At the hospital, you will participate in a G-tube class before the surgery. After surgery, the nurses at the hospital will help you take care of your child's G-tube so you will be comfortable with the care. Call 801 662-3698 to schedule the class.

What if I would like more information?

You can find more information on the web at this website: https://intermountainhealthcare.org/ext/Dcmnt?ncid=520499534

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