

# NJ Feeding Tube for Adults: In the Hospital

## What is an NJ feeding tube?

**NJ tube** is short for **nasojejunal** tube. It carries food through the nose to the **jejunum** — part of the small intestine. The NJ tube is soft and flexible so it can pass through the nose and stomach comfortably. In the jejunum, food and medication can be quickly absorbed into your body.

The jejunum is small, so it can only take a small amount of food at a time. With an NJ tube, food is given at a slow, continuous rate.

## Why do I need an NJ tube?

You may need an NJ tube if you can't tolerate food in your stomach. You may have this problem if:

- You cannot swallow safely
- You have severe reflux or vomiting
- Your stomach does not empty fast enough
- You need slow feeding to give your body time to absorb the liquid food or calories

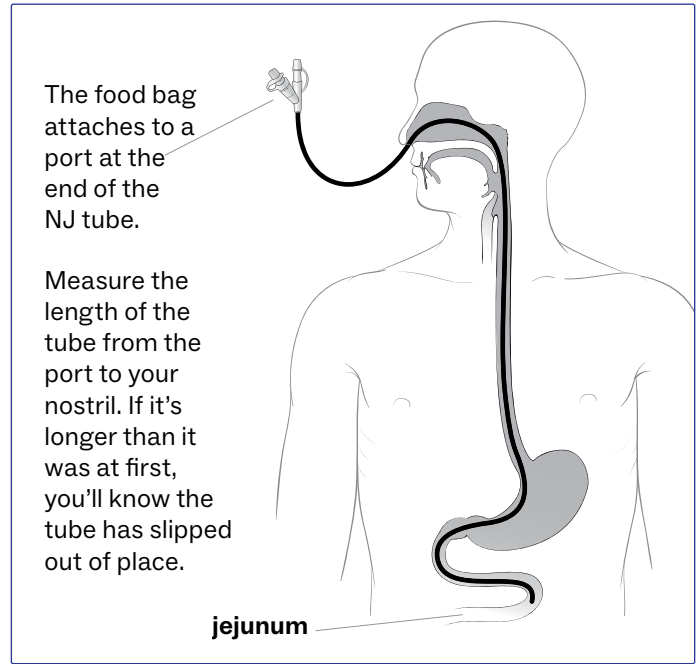
## How is an NJ tube put in place?

An NJ tube is put in place either in the medical imaging department or at the bedside. Before putting the tube in, your healthcare providers will explain the process and answer your questions. Your healthcare providers will:

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### Prepare you to receive the NJ tube safely

- Give you medication to help you relax while the tube is being inserted.
- Check to make sure you can breathe well through both sides of your nose.
- Measure the length of the tube that will be inserted, and mark the tube to show when it's in far enough.
- Position you so you're sitting up a little (unless your doctor says not to).



### Insert the NJ tube

- Insert the tube into your nostril. You may be asked to lower your chin to your chest to help the tube pass through your throat in the right way.
- Advance the tube slowly until the marked position reaches your nose. You may be asked to lie on your right side.

### Make sure the NJ tube is in the right place — and will stay there

- Take an x-ray to make sure the tube is in the right place. Adjust the position of the tube if necessary.
- Tape the tube securely to your nose and cheek.
- Draw a mark on the tube at the point where it enters your nose. Your nurse will then measure the length from the mark to the end of the tube. This will make it easier to see if the tube has moved in or out.

## How do feedings work?

Your healthcare providers will set up your formula and pump so you get the nutrition you need in a way that your body can use it safely.

- The NJ tube will be attached to a bag of liquid formula, and the bag of formula will be attached to a pump.
- Your nurse will adjust the feeding pump so you get a slow stream of formula 24 hours a day.
- Every 4 to 6 hours, your nurse will stop your feeding for a few minutes to flush the tube with water. This helps keep the tube from getting clogged.
- The bag of formula will be replaced every 24 hours.

## How do I get medication through the tube?

When it's time for your medications, your nurse will stop your feeding for a few minutes and:

- Put your medication in a medication syringe. If your medications are not in liquid form already, your nurse will first crush them and mix them with water.
- Flush the tube with water to keep it from clogging.
- Attach the medication syringe to the medication port on the tube and push the medication into the tube.
- Flush the tube with water between each medication, if you need more than one medication.
- Flush the tube with water again and reconnect your feeding bag, when you've had all your medications.

## How will my nurses help care for my tube?

To make sure you continue to get the nutrition you need, your nurses will:

- Check every day to make sure your NJ tube is in the right place.
- Flush your NJ tube with water every few hours to prevent it from clogging.
- Change your feeding bag every 24 hours.

## What do I need to do?

You can help make sure you keep getting good nutrition when you:

- Help keep the tube from moving out of place. Don't pull it or remove the tape.
- Call your nurse right away if:
  - You think your tube has moved out of place.
  - You start to cough, vomit, or gag.
  - Breathing becomes difficult.

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