

Let's Talk About...

Checking Nasogastric (NG) or Orogastric (OG) Tube Placement

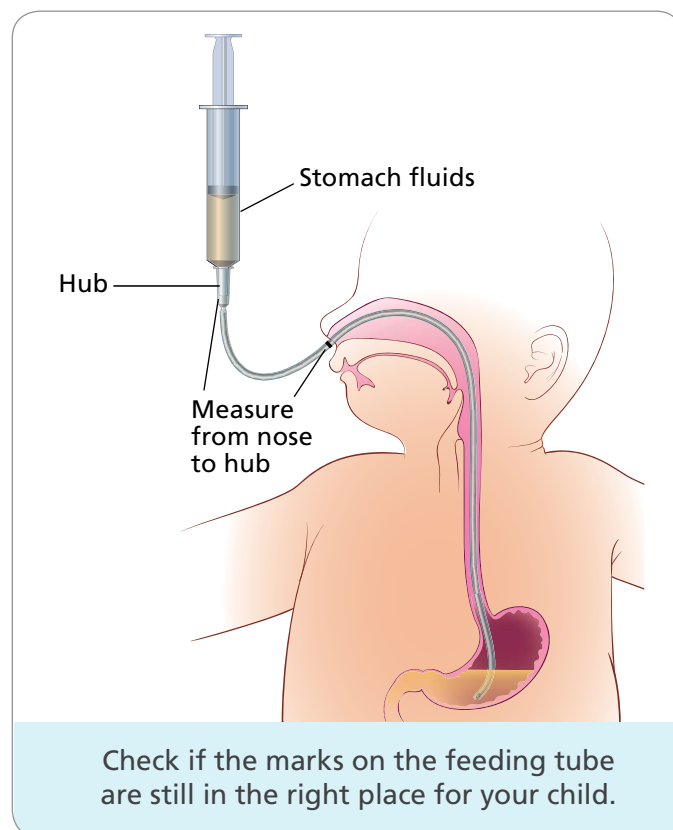
After a nasogastric (NG) or orogastric (OG) feeding tube has been placed in your child, it is important to make sure the end of the tube that is inside the child is in the stomach before using the tube. This is called **checking or verifying for placement**.

When should I check to make sure the tube is in the right place?

- Right after the tube has been put in.
- Before giving any medicine or starting feedings.
- Anytime after your child has vomited or coughed in a way that may have moved the tube out of place.
- Anytime your child seems to be having more problems breathing. In this case, it may be best to take the tube out right away and replace it.

How do I check to make sure the tube is in the right place?

- **Measure the length of tube that you can see, starting wherever it leaves your child's nose or mouth.** Keep track of this measurement and make sure it is still the same length before you use the tube.
- **Check if the marks on the tube are still in the right spot.** When you measured the tube before putting it in your child, you made a mark on the tube with a marker. This mark should be at your child's nose or mouth edge. (See picture at right.)
- **Pull fluid out of the tube with a syringe**
 - If you don't get any fluid, try the following: Use a larger syringe, push a little air in the tube, turn your child to their left side, wait 10 to 20 minutes and try again. If you're not able to get any fluid, the tube may not be reaching their stomach. **Pull out the tube and try placing the tube again.**
 - **Check the color of what you pulled out.** Stomach fluid is usually clear, colorless, grassy green, or brown. Pale yellow, dark green, or yellow brown fluid could mean the tube is not in the right place.



- **Check the pH of the fluid** if you have been taught to do so. Learn how to check the pH of the fluid on [page 2](#).

Note: Your child will need to have been fasting (no food, formula, fluids [including water], or medicine) for a period of time for some of these methods to be accurate. So, if your child is getting continuous feedings, you may not be able to use some of these methods all the time. However, be sure to use these methods, like pH and fluid color, right after putting the tube in and whenever you are worried it may not be in the right place.

It's a good sign if your child is acting and breathing normally.

Checking the tube placement with pH paper

This test measures the level of acid in a fluid. Stomach fluids usually have more acid than fluid from the lungs or intestines. This can help us decide where the end of the feeding tube is in your child. Other things, like certain medications, can sometimes change the pH. Talk with your child's team about this.

What to use to test

Use pH paper or strips to test the level of acid in the fluid from your child's tube. If buying your own testing supplies, please be sure they test for values from at least 1 to 13. Follow the instructions to the right on how to use pH paper.

Storage

The pH paper needs to be stored in its original containers at room temperature. The outer container protects it from light and moisture.

How to test

- 1 Check the pH paper container and find the expiration date. Make sure the test paper is not expired.
- 2 Tear off a piece of pH paper and make sure it is not discolored. If it is, get another piece.
- 3 Connect a syringe to the outside end of the feeding tube and pull back on the syringe plunger to get some fluid.
- 4 Put a drop of that fluid on the paper.
- 5 Immediately compare the color of the paper where you dropped the fluid to the color chart on the pH paper container.
- 6 Read the pH value of that color.
- 7 If the fluid is from your child's stomach, the pH value should be 5 or less.
- 8 If the value is more than 5, call your home health nurse or care provider for guidance about what to do. If your child has recently had food, formula, fluids (including water), or medicine, the pH value may be of that substance, not stomach fluid. This test will only be accurate if your child has been fasting for a period of time.

Notes

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