

Giving an Enteral Feeding in a GJ Tube (for children and adults)

If you are unable to eat, or can't eat enough food to meet your body's needs, a feeding tube is a way to provide nutrients to your body. You will be getting food through a feeding tube called a **gastro-jejunal tube (GJ tube)**.

A GJ tube will have more than one port or connecting end. One port goes to the stomach and the other port goes to the **jejunum** [jay-JOO-num] or small bowel. **Make sure you connect the feeding tube to the correct port.**

Your feeding will run continuously to provide the nutrition you need. The steps to give the feeding and take care of the tube are below.

Preparing for a GJ tube feeding

Before working with the GJ tube:

- Clean hands with soap and water.
- Verify the type of formula is correct and check the expiration date. If something is incorrect on the label, call the Enteral Team and do not use the formula.

Flushing the GJ tube

Flushing is the best way to keep your feeding tube working properly. Follow these steps:

- Use warm tap water.
- Flush both the gastric port (G-port) and the jejunal port (J-port) at least twice a day.
- Flush before, between, and after giving medications.
- Flush every 4 to 6 hours for continuous feeding. If the pump can be set to automatically flush, set it to flush every hour unless instructed otherwise.
- Use the recommended flush amounts unless your doctor tells you differently:
 - **Adults:** 30 to 60 mL
 - **Children:** 3 to 5 mL
 - **Newborn:** 1 to 2 mL

Giving a continuous feeding

- 1 Set up the feeding following the directions for the pump (provided in a separate handout) and prime the tubing.
- 2 Place amount of formula in the bag according to hang time:
 - 8 to 12 hours for a ready-to-feed formula
 - 4 hours for any powdered formula
 - 4 hours for any breastmilk
 - 2 hours for any homemade blended formula
- 3 Flush tube with warm water per amounts listed in **Flushing the GJ tube** section.
- 4 Connect the desired port you want to feed through to the feeding bag.
- 5 Start the pump following the manufacturer's directions.
- 6 Rinse the feeding bag with warm water and use it again for up to 24 hours.
- 7 Before adding fresh formula, pour out any remaining formula and rinse the bag with warm water.
- 8 Flush the feeding tube with amounts listed in **Flushing the GJ tube** section anytime the pump is turned off and at the completion of the feeding.

Note: Feeding with a GJ tube should run over several hours. Allowing the feeding to run in too quickly may cause diarrhea and an upset stomach. If this happens, stop the feeding and contact your doctor.

Cleaning the extensions (for button GJ tubes)

Clean the extension after each use with warm water. Rinse well and air dry. If needed, request a “PEG brush” (or equivalent) from the Enteral Team to clean the extension.

Giving medication in your feeding tube

- Always flush the tube with warm water before, between, and after giving medication.
- Try to use liquid medication whenever possible. If the liquid is thick, add a small amount of water to thin it.
- If the medication is a tablet, crush it into a fine powder, mix it with water, and let it dissolve as much as possible.
- Do not give the following medications through your feeding tube (discuss alternatives with your pharmacist):
 - Time-released capsules
 - Digestive enzymes
 - Enteric-coated tablets
 - Biaxin (antibiotic)

General Care

Mouth care

- Brush teeth at least twice each day using a toothbrush and toothpaste.
- Rinse mouth with mouthwash or water several times each day, if allowed.
- Use a lip balm if lips are dry.
- If allowed, suck on sugarless candy, hard candy, or chew gum.

Activities

- You may remove the dressing (sterile pad) to shower. Apply a new dressing when finished.
- Do not go swimming or soak in a hot tub or bathtub unless your doctor says it's okay.



Venting

Venting means to let air out of the stomach similar to a burp. Venting helps stop leakage around the tube. Connect an empty syringe without the plunger to the G-port and let the air escape.

If the tube comes out, follow the instructions from your doctor.

If the tube cracks or breaks or has other damage, call your doctor immediately.

Care of the area around your feeding tube

Your doctor will tell you how to clean the skin around the tube. Remove the dressing for bathing and showering. Change the tube dressing when it gets wet or soiled. A small amount of drainage around the tube is normal. The skin around the tube will normally look pink or red. **If the redness gets larger, has pus drainage, or feels hot, call your doctor.**

After the site is healed, your doctor will tell you how often to care for the skin near the tube (usually you'll clean with soap and water, and then rinse and pat the skin dry). Properly taping the tube will help prevent complications in the area. Call the Enteral Team for instructions.

De-clogging your tube

Your GJ tube may become clogged. First, check if the tube is kinked. If it is not, follow 1 of these 2 methods to “de-clog” (unclog) the tube.

Method 1: Flushing

- 1 Fill a syringe with the amount of warm water listed in the **Flushing the GJ tube** section.
- 2 Flush the tube.
- 3 Repeat 4 to 5 times until the tube flushes easily.
- 4 If you are unable to de-clog the tube, call your doctor.

Method 2: Using a de-clogging enzyme

- 1 Disconnect the pump and all extensions.
- 2 Add water to the syringe with the powder up to the 10 mL line.
- 3 Shake the syringe until the powder is dissolved.
- 4 Attach the syringe to the feeding tube and inject as much solution into the tube as you can.
- 5 Let the solution stay in the tubing for 60 minutes.
- 6 Flush the tube with warm water.
- 7 If this doesn't de-clog your tube, repeat the steps above starting with step 4. If you are still unable to de-clog your tube, call your doctor.

Need help or have questions?

Enteral Team

(385) 887-7356

Intermountain Homecare Main Number

(385) 887-6000 | (800) 527-1118 (Toll Free)

Questions for my doctor

Notes

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