Let's Talk ABOUT...

It is normal to worry about how to handle common gastrostomy button problems. This handout will tell you about the common gastrostomy button problems and how to solve them. You can find more detailed information in the booklet: *Home Care of Your Child after a Gastrostomy*.

What is a gastrostomy button?

A **gastrostomy button** (*G*-button) is a device that helps you feed your child. It sits on the outside of the skin on the belly and has a little tube that goes into the stomach. The *G*-button lays flat against the skin, but you can open it up so the child can receive a feeding through a tube into the stomach. A gastrostomy button allows a child to move around and have a more normal life than other types of gastrostomy tubes.

How does a child receive a gastrostomy button?

During surgery, a surgeon makes a small hole on the outside of the body to the stomach. This is called a stoma. Then the surgeon puts the button into the stoma.

Types of Gastrostomy buttons:

There are two types of buttons: balloon and non-balloon. They are available in several different brands and models. If you do not know which type of G-button your child has, ask your child's doctor.

Balloon:

Balloon buttons have a silicone "balloon" on the inside end to keep the feeding tube in the stomach. The balloon is inflated with water. Brand names for some types of balloon buttons include MIK-KEYTM and AMTTM balloon.

 Check the amount of water each week to see if it changes. You will be taught how to check and refill the balloon.

Gastrostomy button problems

- If the amount of water changes, you may need to put more water in the tube.
- Balloon-type buttons usually last about three months, and then you need to change it. The timing is different for each child. You will be taught how to change the button.
- If you have questions about how often you should change your child's button ask your child's doctor.

Non-balloon:

- Non-balloon tubes do not have a balloon.
 Instead, they have a silicone disk that holds the button in place. Some common brand names are Bard™, AMT MINI™ non- balloon, and ENTRISTAR™.
- These tubes may last for three years or more before they have to be changed. The clinic will change this button for you.

What are the common G-button problems and how do I take care of them?

G-buttons sometimes have problems. They may leak, clog, or a growing child may need a different size button. These problems are described below. They can usually be fixed quickly.

Food leaking around the tube

When a child is sick, the stomach sometimes does not empty properly or as quickly. The stomach stays full.

Sometimes, formula backs up in the stomach and leaks out onto the skin around the button. This can mean your child's stomach is too full.

Check with your child's doctor to see if you can do the following:

- Slow the rate of feeding (if feeding continuously)
- Reduce the amount of feeding (if feeding at regular intervals or "bolus")

- Feed in smaller amounts more frequently throughout the day.
- If these suggestions do not work, contact your child's doctor or the clinic.

The balloon does not stay inflated

The button may be worn out. G buttons eventually wear out. The amount of time that it takes for the button to wear out depends on the child's growth and if the button has a balloon or not.

To check if a balloon button is worn out do the following:

- Remove the water from the balloon with a syringe and measure how much was in the balloon. Be sure to hold the button in place. If there is less water than you or your doctor put in, there could be a leak
- Refill the balloon. Your child's doctor or ostomy nurse will tell you how much water to put in the balloon. Usually it is three to five cc.
- Wait one to two hours.
- Check the balloon again. If there is less water than you put in the balloon, change your child's button because the balloon is worn out and leaking.
- If there is the same amount of water that you put in the balloon, the water probably just evaporated and you do not have to change the button.

The button is old and needs to be changed:

- If your child has a balloon button, you will change it at home. This is usually every three months. If you need help changing the button, call the Wound/Ostomy Clinic at 801.662.3693.
- If your child has a non-balloon button, the clinic will change the button. This is usually

every three years. Call to schedule an appointment using one of the numbers listed below.

The button is clogged and the food will not go in

- Attach the extension tubing
- Put 5 cc of warm water into the tube.
- Clamp the tube and let the water sit in the tube for 10 to 15 minutes.
- With a 60 cc syringe, try to remove the water and the clog from the tube.
- If the clog does not clear, repeat the steps several times or until the clog clears.
- If this does not work, replace the button and call your physician, or the Ostomy department.

Your child needs a new size G-button

Your child may need a larger G-button if you notice any of these things:

- The button sinks into your child's tummy
- Your child has grown or gained weight
- Your child has the same size button for a long time.
- Please call your physician or the Primary Children's Ostomy clinic to schedule a new fitting.

What do I do if I have more questions?

If you have more questions, call one of these numbers:

- The Surgery Clinic: 801.662.2958 or 801.662.2959
- The Wound/Ostomy Clinic: 801.662.3691

