

## AT HOME TIPS FOR MANAGING FEEDING TUBES



Your child or youth's nasogastric (NG) tube helps to give them food or medicine through the nasal passage when they are unable to eat or swallow. NG tubes are also helpful because they can be used as a suction device to remove contents from the stomach.

While your child or youth's NG tube is in place, it's very important to follow the detailed feeding and care instructions given to you by your health-care team. Here are some additional tips to help you manage your child's NG tube.

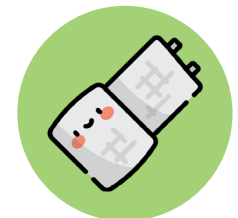
### Wash your hands

It is very important to wash your hands before handling your child's NG tube and preparing and giving their meals. It is one of the most important ways of preventing and controlling the spread of infections.



### Care for the NG tube site

Make sure the tube is securely taped in position and always replace tape if it appears to be loose. This is to avoid the tube coming out. Use a soft hypoallergenic dressing on your child's face to secure the tube and check the skin underneath daily for any reaction to the tape. Do not tape the tube too tightly to your child's nasal passage. Keep your child's nasal passage clean and dry.



### Keep the tube secure

Taking good care of securing your child's NG tube will help prevent the device from coming out. When you are moving or handling your child during feeding it's very important the tubing does not get trapped. For example, it could get caught in your child's stroller/chair, which would pull on the NG tube and cause it to come out.

Babies and small children will often try to pull their NG tube out. At night, try putting mittens or socks on their hands to keep them from pulling the tube out. You can also secure the end of the NG tube or thread it under their clothing so they can't access it.



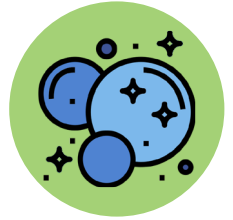
### Check the NG tube placement

To prevent your child inhaling anything into their lungs, you must check the tube placement before each feeding or medication administration flush to be sure it has not moved. The stomach should be as empty as possible when checking its placement.



## Keep feeding supplies clean

Keeping your supplies clean prevents bacterial growth which can cause serious illness. With good cleaning, feeding bags and tubing may be changed twice a week (**every three days**). Many families find it convenient to alternate using two feeding bags and tubing. While one set is being cleaned, the other one is ready for use.



### Feeding bag cleaning and care:

- rinse the bag with water after each feeding and allow it to air dry – do not wash equipment in the dishwasher
- wash the feeding bag in a clean sink with warm soapy water, rinse it and allow it to air dry – this needs to be done at least once a day
- replace the feeding bag if it smells sour or looks cloudy/dirty
- replace the feeding bag or tubing if it gets stretched from the pump – stretched equipment won't give the formula at the set rate

### Syringe care:

- dispose of your enteral syringes on a weekly basis
- take syringes apart at least once a day (separate the barrel from the plunger) and clean in warm, soapy water
- rinse them well with hot water and air dry them on a clean surface between uses
- store in a clean, dry container with a lid once dry until they need to be used again – reusable syringes can be washed and reused for one week

### Do not use the enteral syringe if:

- the markings on the syringe are no longer visible
- the syringe is damaged in any way
- there is stiffness when using the syringe
- if you are unable to ensure thorough cleaning between uses

### Storage of pH indicator strips:

- keep the pH indicator strips in a cool dry place
- keep the container sealed by always replacing the correct lid when removing a strip
- check the expiry date on the container and use within the expiry date

pH strips – can be purchased at CHEO's KidCare pharmacy or Shopper's Drug mart.

## Funding tips

- If you are receiving services from the LHIN (Local Health Integration Network) your supplies and equipment may be provided or rented for a limited time.
- Your health-care team will give you a list of stores where you can buy or rent equipment – check with your insurance company to see if these costs are covered.
- You can apply to the Assistive Devices Program (ADP) provided by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-term Care. If you are eligible, ADP may cover some of the cost of your supplies.
- If you need help to pay for your supplies, please talk with your social worker.

## Who can I contact with questions?

### Ask nurses about:

- weight
- tube feeding supplies
- feeding tube or feeding tube site care
- skin problems
- oral feeding

### Ask your dietician about:

- weight
- formula
- oral feeding

### Ask your primary care doctor about:

- weight
- formula
- skin problems
- oral feeding

### Ask community nursing support services about:

- tube feeding at school or daycare

### Ask your pump rental store or company about:

- feeding pump issues

### Ask your occupational therapist about:

- oral stimulation during tube feeding
- oral feeding

### Ask your speech language pathologist about:

- oral feeding
- oral stimulation during tube feeding

## Need information? Visit [cheo.on.ca](http://cheo.on.ca)

Use our handy search tool to find CHEO-approved health resources, clinic information and much, much more!



## Have you registered for MyChart?

MyChart is a **FREE** secure, online patient portal that connects patients to parts of their CHEO electronic health record, anywhere, at any time.

To apply for MyChart access, visit [cheo.on.ca/mychart](https://cheo.on.ca/mychart) and fill out the MyChart access request form. Once your application has been approved, we'll send you an email with an activation code and instructions on how to

