

## Tube Feeding Using a Pump

This handout provides information about your feeding tube. Your tube feeding will be given using a pump. A feeding pump is a special device that controls the timing and amount of formula given. This is usually for people whose feeding tube ends past their stomach, in their small intestine, or for those who do not tolerate bolus or gravity feedings into the stomach.

Tube feeding formula is a liquid source of nutrition. It provides calories, protein, water, vitamins, and minerals. Formula flows from a feeding bag or pre-filled container through the tubing that runs through the pump and then into your feeding tube.

Tube feedings using a pump may be scheduled as:

1. **Continuous:** Usually running for 24 hours.
2. **Cyclic:** One long period of tube feeding with a break. Can run during the night or during the day, most usually 8-14 hours per day.
3. **Intermittent:** Short periods of tube feeding, usually multiple times per day.

### My Tube Feeding Plan

My formula is called: \_\_\_\_\_

My schedule:

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### Tube Feeding Rate

If you prefer to shorten the total time of your tube feeding, you may do so by increasing the rate. Only do this if you are tolerating the feedings well.

Here are some options:

\_\_\_\_\_ mL per hour for \_\_\_\_\_ hours  
\_\_\_\_\_ mL per hour for \_\_\_\_\_ hours  
\_\_\_\_\_ mL per hour for \_\_\_\_\_ hours

### My hydration:

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### Steps for Using Your Tube

Follow these steps for your tube feedings, or as directed by your healthcare provider.

1. Wash your hands with soap and water. Dry them with a clean towel.
2. Use room temperature formula. Cold formula may cause stomach pain.
3. Wash the lid of the container. Dry the lid with a clean towel.
4. Only open containers of formula that you will need for the feeding.
5. Shake the container(s) before opening.
6. Only place enough formula needed for 12 hours into the bag at one time. Allow the bag to fully empty before adding more formula. Store opened, leftover formula in the fridge with a cover. Discard formula that has been open for more than 24 hours.
7. Open the cap on the feeding tube. Using a syringe, insert at least 30 mL of warm water into your tube.

8. Remove the syringe. Connect the tubing from the pump into your feeding tube.
9. Pour the formula into the feeding bag. Start the pump at the prescribed rate.
10. During feedings, sit upright so that your shoulders are higher than your stomach. Sit in a chair or prop yourself up in a bed or on the couch. Never lie flat on your back during feedings.
11. To prevent clogging, flush the tube with 30 mL water every 4 hours during the tube feeding.
12. When the feeding is complete, disconnect the feeding bag. Flush the tube with at least 30 mL of warm water. Then, cap the tube to prevent leaking. Wash your hands with soap and water. Dry them with a clean towel.

### **Cleaning**

1. Flush your tube with at least 30 mL of warm water. Close the cap on your feeding tube.
2. Rinse the feeding bag and tubing with water. Then, swish with warm water and a small amount of liquid dish soap. Rinse and allow to air dry.
3. Clean the syringe with warm, soapy water. Allow to air dry completely.

Change the tube feeding bag every 3 days.  
Change the syringe each week.

### **Water Flushes**

Your body needs enough fluid each day to stay hydrated. Your tube feed formula will provide some fluids. The rest of your fluid will be met by oral intake (if safe) and/or by doing water flushes through your feeding tube. You may not be getting enough fluid if you have: dizziness, dry mouth, dry lips,

lower urine output than normal and darker urine.

### **Medicines**

You can give medicine through the feeding tube if you cannot swallow them. Follow these instructions:

1. Do not add medicine directly to the formula. Give each medicine one at a time (do not mix medicines together).
2. Flush the tube with 30 mL water before giving a medicine. Flush with 10 mL water between each medicine. Flush with 30 mL water after giving last medicine.
3. **Check with your pharmacist or provider to see if your medicines can be crushed.** If so, crush and dissolve pills in at least 30 mL water before flushing them through the tube. Flush the tube again with 30 mL water after you give the medicine.

### **When to Call**

- **The tube clogs.** Your tube may clog at times because of medicines or if you are not flushing with water often enough. This is not an emergency. First try to flush the tube with 30 mL of warm water. Never force fluid into the tube. If this does not unclog the tube, call the clinic.
- **Tube falls out.**
- **You are losing weight.** Weigh yourself 3 times a week at the same time of day on the same scale. Early morning is best, after urinating. Keep a record of your weight. If you notice weight gain or loss of more than 2-3 pounds per week, contact your healthcare team.
- **Nausea or upset stomach** for more than 24 hours.

- **Diarrhea:** 3 or more loose, watery bowel movements for more than 2 days.
- **Constipation:** no bowel movement for more than 5 days.
- Anything that causes you to stop giving tube feedings for more than one day.

### Who to Call

If you are a UW Health patient and have more questions, please call UW Health at one of the phone numbers listed below. You can also visit our website at [www.uwhealth.org/nutrition](http://www.uwhealth.org/nutrition).

After leaving the hospital, you may need a follow-up clinic visit with a registered dietitian to review your progress and update your feeding plan.

Nutrition clinics for UW Hospital and Clinics (UWHC) and American Family Children's Hospital (AFCH) can be reached at: **(608) 890-5500**.

### Tube Feeding Resources

- Tube Feeding with a Pump video: [patient.uwhealth.org/tube-feeding-with-pump](http://patient.uwhealth.org/tube-feeding-with-pump)



- UW Health tube feeding education video series: [patient.uwhealth.org/education/tube-feeding](http://patient.uwhealth.org/education/tube-feeding)



- Abbott Nutrition: [abbottnutrition.com/nutrition-resources](http://abbottnutrition.com/nutrition-resources)
- Nestle Health Science: [nestlehealthscience.us/mytubefeeding/tube-feeding-education](http://nestlehealthscience.us/mytubefeeding/tube-feeding-education)
- Oley Foundation: [oley.org](http://oley.org)
- Feeding Matters: <https://www.feedingmatters.org/>

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 7/2023. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#296.