

TUBE FEEDING AT HOME

Updated on
12/02/2024



**Thanks to Nutricia for allowing us to
share their information**

- Information regarding tube feeding at home.

CHECKING AND STORING

Products may occasionally be damaged during transit or become contaminated if not stored correctly.

- **Checking the enteral nutrition product**

Check you have the correct enteral nutrition product. Make sure the name on the product is the same as the one prescribed by the managing healthcare professional/dietician.

Check the enteral nutrition product is within the expiry date printed on the case and on the individual pack or bottle; check any foil seals are intact.

Always gently shake the bottle or pack before use.

Check the liquid looks smooth and does not appear to have 'curdled'. If there are signs of curdling, use a different bottle or pack with the same name printed on it - if you have concerns please contact the Customer Service team.

- **Storing your products and equipment**

Equipment must be kept clean and could be damaged if kept at the wrong temperature.

Store unopened products and equipment in a cool dry place.

Avoid placing products and equipment next to radiators or in direct sunlight.

In the winter months, if it is likely to freeze, do not place enteral nutrition products of feeding equipment in garden sheds, garages or outbuildings.

Remember to store your enteral nutrition products by date order so that you use the oldest product first.

Contact your Customer Service team if you have enteral nutrition products that are no longer needed.

SAFE HANDLING

● Hand washing

Effective handwashing will reduce the risk of infection.

Equipment: liquid soap, warm water, a clean dry towel.

- i. Remove rings and watches
- ii. Wet your hands under running water and apply soap
- iii. Rub your palms vigorously together, making sure all skin areas are washed paying particular attention to finger tips, thumbs, back of hands, wrists and between fingers.
- iv. Rinse thoroughly with warm water to make sure all soap is removed.
- v. Always dry hands on a clean towel.

● Minimising contamination of the enteral nutrition product through safe handling.

- i. Careful handling of the enteral nutrition product and feeding equipment will also reduce bacteria spreading and prevent complications such as vomiting and diarrhoea.
- ii. To lower the risk of contamination, set up equipment using a clean work area. Avoid touching any internal part of the product container, giving set or feeding tube with your hands; avoid unnecessary handling of equipment.
- iii. Ready made products can be hung for up to 24 hours from opening, providing they are handled using a clean technique. Any decanted or poured feeds, or made up from a powder, has a limited hanging time of no more than four hours.
- iv. Containers must not be topped up once feeding has started; the total volume must be decanted at the start of the new feeding period.
- v. Dispose of any unused enteral nutrition product after the above time period
- vi. Change giving sets every 24 hours, or more frequently if advised by the managing healthcare professional.
- vii. Before disposing of enteral feeding waste products you will need to check with the managing healthcare professional, local hospital or authority that it is acceptable to dispose of them in your normal household rubbish.

POSITIONING DURING ENTERAL FEEDING

● Correct positioning during and following tube feeding

Correct positioning of the client during and after enteral tube feeding will help their stomach settle and help prevent complications.

- i. It is important to position the client at an angle of 45 degrees or greater whilst feeding, and for at least one hour after the feeding session has stopped.

- ii. If the client is unable to maintain the 45 degree position you will need to support them with pillows at a minimum angle of 30 degrees - please discuss with the managing healthcare professional if you find this a challenge.
- iii. If it is a PEG tube, please monitor for any signs of leakage, pain or discomfort, before, during and after feeding. If you do notice any of these symptoms, please stop feeding immediately and contact the GP, Nutricia Homeward Nurse or managing healthcare professional.
- iv. If the client starts to feel short of breath, stop feeding immediately and seek urgent medical advice or call an ambulance.

THE FEEDING TUBE

It is important to check the position of the feeding tube to prevent complications.

To keep the feeding tube in the best condition and to avoid unnecessary replacement of the feeding tube, follow the instructions below:

- **Prevent tube blockages**

Regular care and flushing of the feeding tube will help to prevent it becoming blocked.

Equipment: a 60ml syringe and water (type and volume as recommended by the managing healthcare professional).

- i. Wash hands before and after caring for the feeding tube.
- ii. If it is a nasogastric tube (a tube that enters the stomach via the nose) check the pH of gastric aspirate and check for signs that the tube might have moved (such as external tube length and secureness of the fixation tapes) to confirm the tube is correctly placed, as demonstrated to you by the managing healthcare professional.

Never administer anything through a nasogastric tube until you are sure it is in the right place. If you are unable to confirm that the tube is in the correct position do not use the tube and contact the Nutricia Homeward Nurse or managing healthcare professional for advice.

- i. Draw up recommended water with an enteral syringe and attach to the feeding tube.
- ii. Flush the tube with water (type and volume as recommended by the managing healthcare professional) before and after the administration of the enteral nutrition product or medication or every 4-6 hours if feeding is not in progress (except during the night) or as recommended by the managing healthcare professional to prevent tube blockage.
- iii. If you suspect a blockage or you experience resistance when flushing the tube, do not force water into it. Do not use the feeding tube and contact the Nutricia Homeward Nurse immediately.

MEDICATION

Always follow the advice given by your GP or pharmacist. Administering medication correctly will avoid the feeding tube becoming blocked. Follow instructions below:

Equipment: a 60ml enteral syringe, medication, and recommended water, type and volume as recommended by the managing healthcare professional.

1. Request medication in a liquid form where possible (if you are administering via the tube)
2. If medication is available only in tablet form, seek advice from the pharmacist
3. Wash hands before and after giving medication
4. Check feeding tube position prior to administering anything down the tube. If it is a nasogastric tube, check the pH of gastric aspirate and check for signs that the tube might have moved (such as external tube length and secureness of the fixation tapes) to confirm the tube is correctly placed.
5. Flush the feeding tube with water (as recommended by the managing healthcare professional) using a 60ml enteral syringe.
6. Administer medication as prescribed using an enteral syringe
7. 60ml enteral syringes must not be used to measure medication; use appropriate size enteral syringe to measure medication accurately
8. If more than one medication is due to be given at the same time, flush the tube between each medication using a 60ml enteral syringe and water (type and volume as recommended by the managing healthcare professional)
9. Flush the tube with water after (as recommended by the managing healthcare professional) using a 60ml enteral syringe.
10. Do not administer over the counter medication without first consulting the GP.
11. You are advised to contact the managing healthcare professional immediately if there is any reason the client is unable to take the medication or enteral nutrition product.

- **Interactions**

Enteral nutrition products may interact with some drugs. Always check with the pharmacist before administering any medication via a feeding tube.

Where possible administer prescribed medication during a break in the feeding regimen to minimise this.

DAILY CARE

- **Mouth care**

It is important to maintain oral hygiene. This will assist in keeping their mouth, teeth and gums clean and free from infection. The frequency and methods of mouth care will depend on the advice given by the Speech and language therapist, GP and dentist.

DIFFICULTIES MANAGING MOUTH CARE

If the client has a sore mouth, bleeding gums, blistered tongue or mouth, you must contact their dentist or GP for advice.

- **Skin Care**

Care of the skin around the feeding tube will reduce irritation and possible infections.

DIFFICULTIES MANAGING SKIN CARE

If the skin becomes sore or irritated, contact the nurse or GP.

Avoid using creams as they can damage the tube material and may lead to irritation of the skin and give rise to infection.

TUBE FEEDING METHODS

- **Continuous or bolus feeding**

Enteral nutrition products can be given continuously or in smaller amounts during the day (also called 'bolus feeding'). It will depend on the advice of the managing healthcare professional, your client's personal situation, the tube position and where possible, your own preference.

Continuous pump feeding: The client will receive their enteral nutrition product through a continuous drip using a feeding pump.

Bolus feeding: The client's enteral nutrition product will be delivered in smaller amounts throughout the day/night using a 60ml enteral syringe or a bolus feeding set.

Only use the feeding method the managing healthcare professional has advised.

- **Pump feeding**

The speed of feeding can be programmed into a feeding pump and an alarm will sound when the pack or bottle is empty or if problems occur.

Ensure that the client's pump and stand are kept clean and in good working order by checking and cleaning as per the instruction booklet at regular intervals.

FEEDING PUMP INSTRUCTIONS

- **Follow the 'Flocare feeding pump instructions'**

Equipment: Feeding pump, stand, giving set, feeding tube, 60ml enteral syringe, enteral nutrition product, recommended water.

- i. Wash hands before and after operating pump, refer to 'Minimising Contamination of Feeding Through Safe Handling'
- ii. Check the label of your client's enteral nutrition product to make sure you are using the correct product.
- iii. Position the client at 45 degrees during and for at least one hour after tube feeding.
- iv. Check feeding tube position prior to administering anything down the tube. If it is a nasogastric tube, check the pH of gastric aspirate and check for signs that the tube might have moved (such as external tube length and secureness of the fixation tapes) to confirm the tube is correctly placed.

- v. Flush the feeding tube using a 60ml enteral syringe containing volume and type of water as recommended by the managing healthcare professional.
- vi. Prepare and hang the enteral nutrition product as demonstrated during training and follow the appropriate pump instructions.
- vii. Program the pump as shown in the relevant pump instruction booklet or pump leaflet.

Please note: If the pump alarm sounds refer to the pump troubleshooting guide in the pump instruction booklet or pump leaflet. If the pump continues to alarm contact the Nutricia Homeward Nurse or out of hours advice line.