

Feeding through a Gastrostomy Tube **SKILL**

Watch and Review

- ▶ Watch the video, then just follow each of the steps.

Methods of Feeding

- ▶ There are several different ways to feed through the gastrostomy tube. The delivery and feeding method will be determined by your health care provider.

Feeding Delivery Methods and Devices



Direct/Syringe/Gravity	A large syringe is inserted into the feeding tube port or extension/feed set. Feeding is added to the syringe and flows by gravity through the feeding tube.
Direct/Feeding Bag/Gravity	A feeding bag is filled and elevated to allow feeding to flow through the feeding tube port into the feeding tube.
Pump Feeding	A feeding bag is attached to a pump. The pump allows feedings to be given over a set period of time: over several times in a day or continuously.

About Your Feeding Solution

- ▶ The type of enteral feeding you will be getting is based on your overall health and medical condition. Your health care provider will give you the type, amount, rate, and delivery method for your feedings. See your discharge instructions.
- ▶ Check your feeding solution—always check the label and expiration date of the feeding solution. Do not use if the expiration date has passed.
- ▶ Cover and refrigerate all unused, open containers or prepared feeding solutions. Always label the container with the date and time it was opened.
- ▶ Feeding solution used straight from the container can hang for up to 8 hours. Feeding solution that is mixed with water, powder, or other liquids can be hung for up to 4 hours. Breast milk can also be hung for 4 hours. Dispose of open feeding solution if it has not been used in 24 hours.
- ▶ Opened powdered formula can be stored for up to 30 days.
- ▶ Breast milk can be stored in the refrigerator for 2 days before being discarded. Dispose of fortified breast milk after 24 hours.
- ▶ If the feeding solution has been stored in the refrigerator, warm it to room temperature by holding the container under warm tap water or setting it in a bowl of warm water.
- ▶ Do not microwave feeding, as hot spots and uneven heating can occur with this method.
- ▶ Be sure that feeding tubes are flushed before and after each feeding with the amount of water recommended by your physician.

Type of formula	Maximum Hang Time
Formula straight from the container	8 hours
Formula mixed with water, powders, or other liquids	4 hours
Breast milk	4 hours

Skills Done before Each Feeding

1. SKILL: PREPARE THE FEEDING SOLUTION

- ▶ Check the label and expiration date on the feeding. Do not use if the expiration date has passed.
- ▶ If the feeding has been stored in the refrigerator, warm it to room temperature by holding the container under warm tap water or setting it in a bowl of warm water.

2. SKILL: GATHER THE EQUIPMENT

- ▶ A feeding syringe or feeding bag
- ▶ An extension/feed set (optional) for buttons only
- ▶ A feeding pump (optional) if you are feeding continuously
- ▶ Feeding solution
- ▶ Water to flush the tube after feeding



3. SKILL: POSITION FOR FEEDING

- ▶ A child, infant, or adult needs to be in an upright position during the entire feeding.
- ▶ An infant or a small child may be held in your arms.
- ▶ A child or adult may be seated in a chair.
- ▶ If the feeding is given during the night or to someone who is in bed, the goal is to keep the head higher than the stomach. Elevate the head and upper body to a 30- to 45-degree angle by using several pillows or a bolster.
- ▶ If eating along with the feeding is an option, small portions should be available to suck or chew on.



4. SKILL: ATTACH THE EXTENSION/FEED SET FOR G-TUBE BUTTONS ONLY

The feeding extension set needs to be connected and disconnected from the feeding source and feeding device before and after each feeding.

- ▶ Wash your hands with soap and water.



- ▶ Open the safety cap on the G-tube button.
- ▶ Hold the G-tube button firmly between 2 fingers.
- ▶ Line up the black marks on the end of the extension feed set with the marks on the feeding cap.



Line up the black lines



Rotate the extension set a $\frac{3}{4}$ turn

- ▶ Insert the extension/feed set securely into the button or port marked "gastric."
- ▶ Turn no more than a $\frac{3}{4}$ turn clockwise to lock.
- ▶ Make sure the feeding set is locked in securely.

SKILL: FEEDING DIRECTLY THROUGH A SYRINGE WITH GRAVITY (BOLUS SYRINGE FEEDING)

Please see page 17 and follow steps for Skills 1, 2, and 3 (and 4 if you have a low-profile tube)

- ▶ Wash your hands with soap and water.
- ▶ Pull back tightly on the plunger to remove it from the feeding syringe, and set the plunger aside. Attach the empty feeding syringe to the feeding port or extension set.
- ▶ Slowly pour the recommended amount of feeding solution into the syringe.
- ▶ Unclamp the feeding tube and allow the feeding to flow through the tube. The feeding will normally flow in over 15 to 20 minutes. Lifting the syringe higher will result in a faster flow, and lowering the syringe will result in a slower flow. The syringe may not hold the entire amount of formula, so you may have to fill it several times.
- ▶ When the feeding is finished, pour water into the syringe to flush the tube. For adults, this is routinely 20 mL to 30 mL, and 5 mL to 10 mL for young children.
- ▶ Clamp the tube and remove the syringe.
- ▶ The infant, child, or adult should remain sitting upright for 30 minutes after the feeding.
- ▶ If you used an extension/feed set for a G-button, disconnect the extension/feed set by turning the button or port counterclockwise.
- ▶ Remove the extension set and close the button safety cap.
- ▶ Wash the feeding set with warm, soapy water and let it air-dry.



Pull back on syringe plunger



Remove syringe plunger



Pour syringe feeding



Unclamp tube to deliver feeding



Unclamp the tube

SKILL: GRAVITY FEEDING WITH A FEEDING BAG

Please see page 17 and follow steps for Skills 1, 2, and 3 (and 4 if you have a low-profile tube)

Follow all previous instructions for positioning for feeding, attaching the extension/feed set, and checking for placement and function.

- ▶ Wash your hands with soap and water.
- ▶ Connect the feeding bag and the extension tubing and extension feed set if used.
- ▶ Clamp the feeding bag. Add the required solution to the feeding bag with the lower end clamped.
- ▶ Unclamp and clear or prime the feeding bag so that the solution flows through the tubing to the tip of the feeding extension feed set, and clamp the tubes.
- ▶ Open the safety cap on the feeding tube. If used, connect the feeding bag or extension set.
- ▶ Raise the feeding bag to the required height, open the clamps on the feeding bag and extension/feed set and allow the feeding to flow over 15 to 20 minutes.
- ▶ When the feeding is finished, pour in the prescribed amount of water or use a syringe to flush the feeding tube with water.
- ▶ Clamp the feeding set and gravity bag tubing and remove.
- ▶ Wash the feeding bag and set with warm, soapy water, rinse and hang to dry.



Fill the feeding bag



Flush the feeding tube



Washing the feeding set

SKILL: FEEDING WITH A PUMP

Please see page 17 and follow steps for Skills 1, 2, and 3 (and 4 if you have a low-profile tube)

- ▶ Wash your hands with soap and water.
- ▶ Prepare the tubing by attaching the feeding tube bag to the feeding set and clamp the tubes.
- ▶ Attach the tubing to the feeding pump.
- ▶ Insert the end of the feeding bag tubing into the extension/feed set.
- ▶ Fill the bag with feeding solution. Turn the pump on and hold the Prime button, which will flush the solution through the end of the tubing.
- ▶ Open the safety cap and attach the end of the feeding set to the feeding tube or G-button.
- ▶ Set the rate, unclamp the tubing and push the "Start" button.
- ▶ Tubes should be flushed with water at the end of a feeding or every 4 to 6 hours during continuous feeding.
- ▶ Clamp and disconnect the feeding set or feeding extension set, if used.
- ▶ Wash the feeding and extension set with warm, soapy water at least once a day, rinse, and let it air-dry.



Fill the feeding bag



Prime the pump



Attach extension/feed set



Set the rate

SKILL: FEEDING THROUGH A JEJUNOSTOMY TUBE

Please see page 17 and follow steps for Skills 1, 2, and 3 (and 4 if you have a low-profile tube)

Feedings through the jejunum part of the small intestine bypass the stomach. This decreases the risk of food refluxing back into the esophagus and the risk of aspiration or liquid going into the lungs. Because the stomach normally helps to break down food, a special type of jejunal feeding may be required.

- ▶ Follow the same procedure for feeding with a pump. The feeding will go into the port labeled “Jejunal.” You will also see a port labeled “Gastro.” This is usually used for giving medication or venting the stomach.
- ▶ Jejunal feedings may be started slowly and given in small amounts to be increased as tolerated.
- ▶ If you see feeding return through the gastric port of a GJ-tube while venting, contact your health care provider immediately. This may mean that the GJ-tube has moved or migrated from its placement.



Low-profile button

SKILL: VENTING OR BURPING

You or a family member may experience bloating before, during, or after feeding. If this occurs, gas in the stomach and intestinal tract needs to be relieved.

- ▶ Wash your hands with soap and water.
- ▶ You can vent and release gas by attaching an open syringe or extension feed set to the G-tube. Raise the tube and syringe about 6 inches above the stomach so stomach contents can pass up and down the syringe but won't spill over.
- ▶ Coughing with the safety cap open also releases air from the stomach.
- ▶ When a stoma is new and not matured, a full stomach can sometimes result in leakage around the tube. Leakage around the stoma can lead to skin breakdown around the site. Talk with your care provider about adjusting the rate of the feeding—you might have to give it more slowly.
- ▶ If you have a fundoplication procedure—in which the upper part of the stomach is wrapped around the lower end of the esophagus and is stitched in place—the feeding may need to go in more slowly or allow for continuous venting of gas.



Venting with a syringe