

Trouble Shooting Guide for Tube Feeding

This guide shows some problems you may have with your tube feed, and action you can take to help

Problem: Feeding tube has fallen out

Possible causes: Tube has been pulled out, or the fixator inside the stomach has failed

Solutions: The hole around the tube will start to close within 2-6 hours, so a replacement tube must be placed as soon as possible.

If you have a balloon gastrostomy tube:

- If you have a stoma stopper, place it as soon as possible, following the instructions provided
- Contact the service that normally replaces your tube immediately, or go to the unit that placed the tube, or to Accident and Emergency, immediately. Take your spare tube with you, if you have one
- We have produced a video showing what to do and how to place a stoma stopper, which can be found at <https://vimeo.com/338840745> or scan the QR code overleaf to go to our website, and follow the link in the “Tube Feeding” section.

If you have a PEG or jejunostomy tube:

- Go to the unit that placed the tube, or to Accident and Emergency, immediately

Problem: Cannot flush the feeding tube

Possible causes: Tube may be blocked

Solutions:

- Make sure the clamp on the tube is open
- Try flushing the tube using a push/pause technique
- Try to pull back using an empty syringe
- Roll the blocked area of tube between your fingers to try to move the blockage.
- Try flushing the tube with warm water, fizzy water or soda water
- For adult patients, try a solution of sodium bicarbonate, made by mixing 1 teaspoon of baking soda with 100ml water. If you can flush some of this solution into the tube, leave it in for 15 minutes and then try flushing again
- Keep repeating these steps until the tube is unblocked
- If the tube remains blocked, contact the unit where the tube was placed
- We have produced a video showing how to unblock a feeding tube, which can be found at <https://vimeo.com/338840986> or scan the QR code overleaf to go to our website, and follow the link in the “Tube Feeding” section.

Problem: Connectors on feeding tube broken

Possible causes: Wear and tear, syringes or giving set getting stuck

Solutions:

- If your tube is a PEG and you have a spare end, you may be able to replace the end. We have produced a video showing how to do this, which can be found at <https://vimeo.com/338841106> or scan the QR code overleaf to go to our website, and follow the link in the “Tube Feeding” section.

Trouble Shooting Guide for Tube Feeding, continued

If you have difficulty doing this, contact your Nutricia Homeward Nurse or Community Nurse

- If you have a different tube type, or you don't have a spare end, contact your Nutricia Homeward Nurse, Hospital Nutrition Nurse or Dietitian

Problem: Severe vomiting

Possible causes: Feed may be administered too fast, or other possible causes

Solutions: Try reducing the rate of your feed by half, or if vomiting is still a problem, stop the feed for a few hours then re-start. Continue to have water if you are able to tolerate it, to avoid dehydration. If you are unable to take your full feed for more than 2 days, contact your Dietitian. If the problem persists, Contact your GP, District Nurse or Dietitian

Problem: Excess coughing. Breathing and/ or speech sound 'wet' or 'bubbly'

Possible causes: Feed may be going in to the lungs instead of stomach

Solutions: Do not give any more feed, and contact your GP, District Nurse, or Dietitian

Problem: Temperature and/or diarrhoea

Possible causes: Unwell/ infections

Solutions: Give extra water flushes. Contact your GP if problem persists or worsen

Problem: Urine dark in colour and/or poor output

Possible causes: Urine tract infections, too little fluid, hot weather

Solutions: Give extra water flushes via the tube. Contact your Dietitian to adjust tube feeding plan

Problem: Gaining or losing excess weight

Possible causes: Too much or too little feed

Solutions: Contact your Dietitian for a review

Problem: PEG/ feeding tube site is sore, red or producing pus

Possible causes: Stomach acid leakage / infection

Solutions: Contact your Nutricia Homeward Nurse, District Nurse or GP

Problem: Not enough feed, giving sets, syringes or equipment

Possible causes: Delivery due

Solutions: Call the Nutricia Homeward helpline to organise a delivery (0800 093 3672 – Option 6)

To access our website, scan the QR code below using the camera on a smartphone or tablet

