

Care of your Radiologically Inserted Gastrostomy (RIG) Tube

Nursing and Patient Experience



Patient information leaflet

The purpose of this leaflet is to provide basic information on how to care for your feeding tube from its initial placement to potential problems.

You have had a RIG feeding tube inserted for feed and fluids. It is held in the stomach by a water filled balloon. Your wound and your tube need to be cared for to reduce the possibilities of infection or the tube being dislodged. You and your family if needed will be shown how to do this by a Nutrition Nurse or by a ward nurse.



Immediate action required

It is important that you are aware of the signs and symptoms which may occur up to 72 hours following the insertion of your RIG tube. These are:

1. Pain during feeding or medication delivery.
2. Significant pain or distress after procedure.
3. New bleeding from the feeding tube site.
4. Leakage of fluid around the tube.

In the event of any one of these symptoms, the following actions **MUST** be taken:

1. Stop feeding/medication delivery immediately.
2. Seek immediate medical advice in order that you are examined and your symptoms assessed immediately.

Messages **MUST** not be left on a telephone answering machine. Please contact your GP if you unable to directly speak to the nutrition nurse or if it is outside the hours of Monday to Friday 8am–4pm.

How do I care for my tube for the first 14 days

Your feeding tube site will need at least 14 days to become established. Careful cleaning around the tube will reduce the possibility of soreness or infection.

- Wash your hands before and after caring for your tube.
- Clean the skin around the feeding tube site and under the disc initially with cooled boiled water using gauze, ensure the skin is then dried thoroughly. Do this at least once a day.
- Avoid using creams and powder on the site as they can irritate the skin and may cause infection. Creams can also affect the tube itself.
- If the wound looks sore or red please contact your GP or Practice Nurse. You may need some antibiotics. If you are attending the hospital speak to a Healthcare professional or please contact the Nutrition nurses for further advice.
- You can shower after 24 hrs however please don't bath for at least six weeks as the tube site is still healing.
- The stitches and buttons should fall off after 2-4 weeks. You will be taught how to manage the balloon which holds your feeding tube in place.
- Flush the tube with at least 30ml of water (type as recommended by your healthcare professional) before and after the administration of feed or medication. If you are not using the tube, flush at least daily with water.

Daily care of your feeding tube after 14 days

It is now advised to care for your skin and tube as follows:

- Wash hands before and after caring for your tube.
- Clean the skin around the site with mild soap solution and water, and rinse thoroughly. Make sure the skin is thoroughly dried – do this at least once per day.
- Keep the tube secured with tape at all times.

What should I do if my tube becomes blocked?

Flush tube with warm water using a syringe and a push/pull method, gently pull back to remove sediments if successful, then flush tube well with water

- If unsuccessful wrap the tube in a warm cloth try and flush again with warm water. If it still does not work, try flushing with soda water
- Contact your nurse from your feed supplier via their 24 hour advice line
- If you cannot clear the blockage it may be necessary to arrange for the tube to be replaced, your feed company nurse may contact us to assist or arrange for you to be reviewed in hospital.

What to do if the RIG feeding tube falls out

- You will need to have a new tube inserted as soon as possible as the feeding tube hole may close quickly and will mean that you are unable to give yourself feed or fluids.

Important you cannot replace a RIG tube yourself. You need to contact your GP or hospital within 2 hours. We will need to confirm that the complete RIG tube has come out and subsequently replace the tube.

Follow the steps below:

- Remain calm.
- Place a clean gauze dressing over the stoma (hole) to prevent stomach contents leaking onto your skin or clothes.
- If you are in pain and it is safe for you to have oral medication you should take your prescribed pain relief.
- Contact feed company nurse or Nutrition Nurse. Explain that your RIG has come out.
- Attend the hospital emergency department out of hours.
- Tell the emergency department what type of feeding tube you have (if you know) and emphasise that the new tube will need to be replaced as soon as you arrive so that the hole does not heal over.

What should I do if I have any concerns or need further advice about my tube?

If you need further advice please contact the Nutrition nurses or contact your feed supplier for advice.

If you feel the tube is becoming loose please contact the nutrition nurses based at the hospital and we will arrange for you to be reviewed.

Further information

- BAPEN – British Association for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition, www.bapen.org.uk
- P.I.N.N.T– Patients on artificial nutrition
- www.mndassociation.org
- www.macmillan.org.uk
- www.stroke.org.uk

Reference sources

- National Patient Safety Agency, 2010. Rapid response report. Early detection of complications of Gastrostomy. Supporting information.
- National institute of clinical excellence 2006, updated August 2017, Nutrition support in adults. Oral nutrition support, enteral tube feeding and parenteral nutrition. Clinical guideline 32.

Contact details

X-ray Department

Telephone: 01483 464150

Radiology Department Nurses

Telephone: 01483 571122 **ext** 4205

Dietitians

Telephone: 01483 464119

Nutrition Nurses

Telephone: 01483 571122 **ext** 2598

PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

Telephone: 01483 402757

Email: rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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