

## Tube Care (NG, PEG, G-Tube, J-Tube)

This information will guide you in learning how to take care of a tube that is placed into your stomach or intestinal (GI) tract. These tubes can be used to:

- Provide nutrition
- Relieve abdominal bloating
- Drain GI secretions

The tubes that go through the nose into the stomach are called nasogastric (NG) tubes. Tubes placed in the stomach through a small hole in the abdomen are called percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) tubes or G-tubes (surgically placed gastric tubes). Tubes that are placed in the small intestine through a small hole in the abdomen are called jejunostomy or J-tubes. The tube site is the small hole in the abdomen where the tube enters your body. The anchor of the tube is usually a flat piece that holds the tube tightly against the skin so it does not move in and out. Some J-tubes may not have an anchor but will have stitches.

*Always carefully  
wash your hands  
before you care  
for tubes.*

### Daily Care

- Always wash your hands with liquid soap and water for 1-2 minutes before taking care of your tube or starting the feeding.
- When the tube is first placed, write down or make a mark on the tube to indicate where the anchor or tape should be located. Check that marking each day.
- NG tubes should be taped to the nose to prevent the tube from falling out. It is important to make sure the tube is not pressing on the nostril. The tape can be changed as needed. You can use a little Vaseline® on the nose around the tube if the nostril becomes irritated.
- Each day check the tube site for irritation or redness,

bleeding, drainage or problems with the tube hole becoming larger. Use a hand-held mirror to see all sides of the tube site.

- Check to make sure the anchor has not become too loose or too tight. It should move very slightly, about ¼ inch, in and out.
- Gently wash the skin around the tube site with warm, soapy water daily. If needed you may use a cotton-tipped swab to clean under the anchor or around the stitches. Dry the skin under the anchor. Do not apply ointment or cream to the tube site unless you are instructed to by your doctor.
- Always remember to flush the tube with 20 ml of water **before** and **after** feedings and medicine.

### When to call Your Doctor

- If you notice any thick, foul-smelling drainage that is yellow or green around the tube site
- If skin irritation or redness lasts longer than 2-3 days
- If there is reddened skin around the tube site that increases in size, is swollen, warm to the touch, or painful
- If you have a fever above 101° F
- If you are unable to flush the tube or run the feedings
- If there is an increase in size of tube site opening or leaking of GI contents
- If the tube seems to be moving farther out from the skin or if it falls out
- If you have questions or any unusual symptoms

Tube type \_\_\_\_\_ Doctor's phone number \_\_\_\_\_

### Health Information Resources

For more information, visit one of Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Health Learning Centers. These state-of-the-art health libraries are located on the third floor of the Galter Pavilion and on the first floor of the Prentice Women's Hospital. Health information professionals are available to help you find the information you need and provide you with personalized support at no charge. You may contact the Health Learning Centers by calling 312-926-LINK (5465) or by sending an e-mail to [hlc@nmh.org](mailto:hlc@nmh.org).

For additional information about Northwestern Memorial Hospital, please visit our Web site at [www.nmh.org](http://www.nmh.org).

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