

Family Education Sheet

Use and Care of a Nasogastric (NG) Feeding Tube

Includes content from "Use and Care of a Nasogastric (NG) Feeding Tube", Boston Children's Hospital, 9/20/2017, #169997; used with permission.

What is a Nasogastric (NG) Tube?

An NG tube is a soft, flexible tube that enters through the nose and goes down the esophagus into the stomach.

- It is used to give your child medicine, liquids, or feedings if they are unable to take enough by mouth or it is unsafe to do so.
- It is held in place with tape to your child's cheek or with a nasal tube retaining device such as a Bridle®. (See image 4, page 3).
- It is replaced once a month, or sooner if the NG tube falls out.
- If your child has a nasal tube retaining device, the NG tube and retaining device will need to be replaced by a doctor or nurse.

Safety reminders:

Aspiration (food or stomach contents into the lungs) can occur if the NG tube is in the wrong place. This can happen when vomiting (throwing up) or a strong cough moves the NG tube out of the stomach.

- If your child is vomiting, **DO NOT** use the NG tube until you check the tube's placement.
- If you need to remove the NG tube, take off the tape, and pull out gently and quickly.
- If your child has a nasal tube retaining device, you may cut the string to remove the device and NG tube together.

Take the NG tube out right away if your child:

- Is coughing a lot, has pulled the tube out of their nose, or the tube is coming out of their mouth.
- Turns blue around the mouth.
- Cannot breathe well.

CALL 911 if your child continues to choke or has trouble breathing after taking the tube out.

Seek medical advice:

- If you have questions or concerns.
- If the NG tube falls out and you cannot replace it.
- If your child has a fever of **100.4°F (38°C)** or higher.



IMAGE 1

Infant with NG tube in place. Black mark at nostril indicating the tube position. NG tube secured with tape dressing to child's cheek.

Your Child's NG Tube:

- Type _____ Fr _____ Length _____
- Mark at nostril _____ cm
- Date placed _____

Check the NG tube placement **BEFORE** all feedings, medications, and flushing the tube:

- Ensure the NG tube is at _____ cm or the black mark is at the nostril. (See image 1, page 1).
- If you cannot see the cm number or the black mark, the tube may have moved and may not be in the right place.
- Attach a feeding tube syringe, (e.g. an EnFit® syringe), to the end of the NG tube and pull back a little to see formula and/or partially digested food or stomach juices (clear or light yellow or like recent feedings). (See image 2, page 2)

What if you cannot get stomach content from the NG tube?

- Use a larger syringe (10-30 mL) and pull back OR flush the tube with 1-3 mL of air then attempt to pull back stomach contents.
- If still unable to get stomach contents, place your child on their left side and wait 10-15 minutes and try again.
- If unable to get stomach contents after waiting, do NOT use the NG tube and call your child's doctor. Your child may need an X-Ray to check placement of the tube.

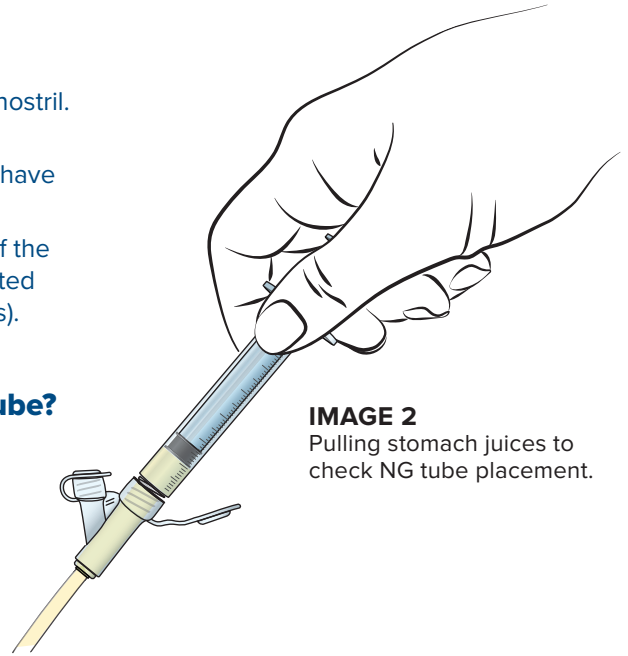


IMAGE 2
Pulling stomach juices to check NG tube placement.

Feedings and Medications

After checking placement, and when you are ready to feed your child, follow the instructions provided by your nurse and vendor teacher:

- Attach the feeding bag or syringe to the NG tube and give the feeding as directed via pump or gravity.
- DO NOT leave your child alone while the feed is running.

If your child is unable to take medications by mouth, ask your health care team about using the NG tube for medications:

- Use liquid medicines whenever possible.
- Crush pills/tablets and dissolve them thoroughly with water.

Flushing the tube: The NG tube needs to be flushed regularly to prevent it from clogging.

- Flush the NG tube with drinkable water before and after giving medications, between medications, and before and after feedings to prevent it from clogging. You will be told how much based on your child's needs OR flush with water once per day if you are not using the tube.

What if the NG is clogged? Gently try and push warm drinkable water into the NG tube using a start/stop motion.

- Never push anything other than drinkable water into the NG tube to unclog it.
- Never use the stylet to try to unclog the NG tube.
- If you cannot unclog the NG tube, it may need to be replaced. ONLY replace the NG tube if you have been taught how to.

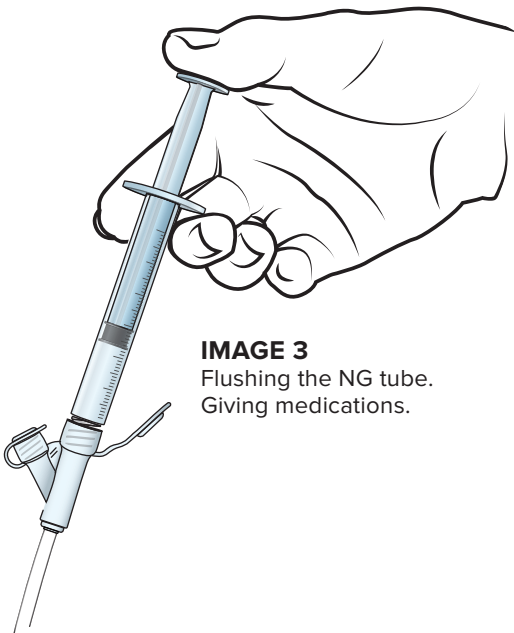


IMAGE 3
Flushing the NG tube.
Giving medications.

How to clean your child's face and around the NG tube:

- Keep your child's face and nostrils clean by gently cleaning both sides at least once per day with warm soapy water. Do not get your child's face too wet because the tape may become loose, and the NG tube could fall out. Replace the tape if it gets wet.
- While cleaning, check the skin around the NG tube and nasal tube retaining device for signs of irritation or infection. If you have any concerns about your child's skin, call your child's nurse or doctor.

Some children will have a nasal tube retaining device in place, for those who do not, families will need to know how to keep the NG tube in place.



IMAGE 4

Cleaning nostrils of child with NG tube and nasal tube retaining device.

Securing the NG tube with tape to your child's cheek (See image 5, page 3):

- Apply layer of barrier film (such as Cavilon® No Sting Barrier) to the cheek where the NG tube will be. Allow to dry.
- Apply a small piece of hydrocolloid skin protectant dressing to protect the skin from irritation (such as Duoderm®) to the skin with the barrier film.
- Place the NG tube along the skin protectant dressing and cover the NG tube with a small piece of tape and or transparent dressing (such as Tagaderm®).
- Secure the NG tube behind the ear and tape the tube to the neck or shoulder.

IMAGE 5

NG tube secured with hydrocolloid skin protectant dressing and tape to child's cheek.



Important tips:

- Clean the end of the NG tube at least once daily with a clean toothbrush and warm water to prevent from getting sticky.
- Watch small children to make sure they do not pull at the NG tube.
- Keep pets away from your child's NG tube to make sure the tube does not get pulled.

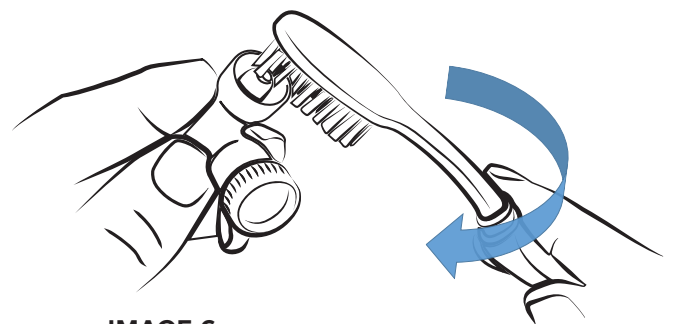


IMAGE 6

Toothbrush cleaning EnFit® end of NG tube.