



Patient & Family Guide  
2018

# Giving Tube Feedings at Home with a Nasogastric Tube

Aussi disponible en français : *Alimentation par sonde naso-gastrique à domicile* (FF85-1917)



[www.nshealth.ca](http://www.nshealth.ca)

# Giving Tube Feedings at Home with a Nasogastric Tube

Giving formula through a feeding tube will help keep you nourished until you are able to eat again by mouth.

- An NG (nasogastric) tube is a tube that is passed through your nose and down into your stomach. This tube lets liquid formula go directly into your stomach.
- The tube can be inserted (put in) by a nurse or doctor at your bedside in the hospital or by a surgeon during your operation. It is held in place by taping the tube to your nose.
- This type of tube is most often used when tube feedings are needed for a short time (often less than 1 month).

**What are your questions?  
Please ask. We are here to help you.**

- The tube is called a \_\_\_\_\_.
- The tube is size \_\_\_\_\_ French.
- The length of the tube (from your nose to the end) is \_\_\_\_\_ cm or \_\_\_\_\_ inches.
- Check the length of the tube before each feeding and before giving any medicine through the tube.
- **If the length of the tube has changed, do not use it.** Contact your doctor to have the tube position checked.
- Your dietitian will suggest the type and amount of formula you should use.
- The name of the formula is \_\_\_\_\_.
- You will need \_\_\_\_\_ cans/bottles a day.
- You can give \_\_\_\_\_ cans/bottles \_\_\_\_\_ times a day OR \_\_\_\_\_.

If you are giving your feeding continuously (non-stop) for several hours or more every day, your doctor or nurse will show you how to use a feeding pump.

## Getting ready

### 1. Clean off a work area

(e.g. table or countertop)

- › wash your hands



### 2. Gather your supplies:

- › formula (store and give at room temperature) \_\_\_\_\_
- › feeding bag and tubing
- › pole or hook for hanging the feeding bag
- › 60 ml syringe – either a luer lock syringe with blue adapter or a catheter tip syringe
- › water (at room temperature)

### 3. Prepare the formula

- If the formula is refrigerated, take it out of the fridge 30 minutes before using it.
- Check the expiry date on the formula **(do not use if past the expiry date)**.
- Wipe the top of the bottle/can with a clean cloth.
- Shake the formula well.
- **Do not heat the formula.**
- **Do not mix the formula with medicine.**

#### **4. Prepare the feeding set**

- **Close** the roller clamp on the tubing.
- Pour the formula into the feeding bag.
- Cover any left-over formula. Write the date and time on the can/bottle and put it in the fridge. After 24 hours, opened formula is too old to use and must be thrown out.
- If the tubing is not already attached to the feeding bag, attach the tubing to the feeding bag. Make sure it is on tight.
- Hang the feeding bag on a pole or hook at least 18-24 inches (45-60 cm) above your nose.
- Squeeze the drip chamber to fill it halfway.
- Remove the cover from the end of the tubing.
- Open the roller clamp on the tube to let the formula run through to the end. This gets rid of air in the tubing.
- Close the roller clamp.

If you are using a feeding pump, follow the steps in your feeding pump guide.

## Remember:

- Measure the length of the tube from your nose to the end of the tube before giving each feeding. If the length of the tube has changed, do not use it. Contact your doctor to have the tube position checked.
- Sit in an upright position while feeding.
- If you are in bed, raise your head at least 30 degrees, or prop yourself up with pillows behind your back.
- You can walk around while doing your feeding.
- **Do not lie flat while feeding or for at least 30 minutes after the feeding finishes.**



## Giving the feeding

- Open the cap at the end of your NG tube.
- Attach the feeding bag tubing to the NG tube.
- Slowly open the clamp on the feeding bag tubing.
- Adjust the clamp to give your feeding over the suggested time:

To give	Aim for
1 can/bottle over 1 hour	15 drops in 15 seconds
2 cans/bottles over 2 hours	15 drops in 15 seconds
1 can/bottle over 45 minutes	20 drops in 15 seconds
2 cans/bottles over 1 ½ hours (90 minutes)	20 drops in 15 seconds
1 can/bottle over 30 minutes	30 drops in 15 seconds
1 ½ cans/bottles over 45 minutes	30 drops in 15 seconds
2 cans/bottles over 1 hour	30 drops in 15 seconds

If you are using a feeding pump, follow the steps in your feeding pump guide.

## Flushing the tube with water

### When the bag is empty:

- Close the roller clamp on the tubing.
- Add \_\_\_\_ ml of water (follow your dietitian's guide on how much water to use).
- Open the roller clamp on the tubing and run water fairly quickly through the tubing.
- Draw \_\_\_\_ ml of water into a 60 ml syringe.
- Close the roller clamp on the tubing. Take the feeding tube out of the NG tube.
- Attach the syringe to the NG tube. Push on the plunger of the syringe to flush the NG tube.
- Remove the syringe and close the cap on the end of the NG tube. Clean the syringe as outlined in the 'Cleaning the feeding equipment' section on the next page.

**Remember: Do not lie flat for 30 minutes after a feeding.**



## **Cleaning the feeding equipment**

- Throw out any formula left in the feeding bag.
- Rinse the feeding bag, tubing, and syringe with clean, cool water.
- Wash the soft-sided feeding bag and tubing with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (60 ml) vinegar and  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (180 ml) water.
- If you are using a hard-sided feeding bag, wash the bag and tubing with warm water and dish soap, using a bottle brush.
- Rinse either soft or hard-sided feeding bags well with warm, clean water and let air dry.
- Check your equipment. If anything is cracked or leaking, or if you see any mold, throw it out and get a new one.
- Use feeding sets and syringes for 2 weeks, then replace them.
- Store equipment and unopened cans/bottles in a clean, dry place.
- **Do not hang the feeding bag (with formula in it) for longer than 4 hours.**

## **While you are on tube feedings**

### **If you are asked to weigh yourself:**

- Take your weight at about the same time each day.
- Wear the same type of clothing each time.
- Use the same scale.
- Balance the scale before using it by placing the needle at zero.
- Write your weight down on the sheet given to you.

### **If your mouth and throat feel dry:**

- Rinse your mouth often.
- Use lip balm (e.g. ChapStick®) on your lips.
- Suck on candy if allowed.
- Ask your dietitian for help if this is still a problem.

### **If the tape around the NG tube is loose:**

- Carefully remove the old tape and put new tape on.
- **Always check that the tube is in the right place after replacing any tape.**
- Clean around your nostril with a Q-tip® and water.

## Home tube feeding record

Fill in the record on the next page each day so you can check how you are doing and note any problems.

- I plan to weigh myself once a week on \_\_\_\_\_ (day of the week).
- My weight on \_\_\_\_\_ was \_\_\_\_ kg (kilograms) or \_\_\_\_ lbs (pounds).

Check the tape on your nose every day. If the tape is loose, change the tape.

Check the length of the tube from your nose to the end of the tube before giving each feeding.

- The length of the tube from my nose to the end of the tube is \_\_\_\_ cm or \_\_\_\_ inches.

**What are your questions? Please ask.  
We are here to help you.**

**In Nova Scotia you can call 811 to talk with  
a registered nurse about your health care  
questions 24/7.**







**Dietitian name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Looking for more health information?**

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/PatientGuides>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

*Nova Scotia Health Authority promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.*

*Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!*

[www.nshealth.ca](http://www.nshealth.ca)

*Prepared by:* Nutrition and Food Services

*Designed by:* NSHA Library Services

The information in this brochure is for informational and educational purposes only.

The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

LC85-1199 © June 2018 Nova Scotia Health Authority

The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.