

Gastrostomy

Information for parents and carers



Equipment and supplies

You will require replacement tubes, feeding sets and dressings. These will be initially provided by the ward before you take your child home. Further supplies can be obtained through the Children and Young People's Home Care Team. If you have problems obtaining supplies then please contact your child's Community Nurse or Dietician.

Remember to order supplies in good time before they run out and only use equipment for the specified amount of time.

Common questions about gastrostomy

Can my child move around freely?

Yes, your child's normal activities should not be restricted.

Can my child bath/shower?

Yes, once the site is fully healed (usually two to four days after insertion). Always ensure the tube end is closed. The area should be dried thoroughly afterwards

Can my child go swimming?

Your child may go swimming six weeks after the gastrostomy stoma has been performed. Make sure the tube end is closed and the clamp applied. Waterproof dressings can be obtained from you GP. Your Community Nurse will advise you on how to coil the tube under the dressing for when your child goes swimming.

Will my child be able to go to school?

Your child should be able to go to school as normal. School staff can be taught to care for the device and supplies can be kept at school for emergency use.

Can we go on holiday?

Yes, but it is advisable to discuss your travel plans with your Doctor/ Community Nurse. It may be helpful, particularly if your child has complex needs, to take a letter with you which will help if you need to seek medical advice whilst on holiday. In addition, a letter from your child's Community Nurse can be useful to prevent problems with airport security when travelling with medical equipment.

It is advisable to contact your travel insurance company before you travel to ensure any treatment that may be required whilst away is covered.

Remember to take extra supplies (emergency and replacement set) with you and to pack at least some of these in your hand luggage in case your main luggage goes astray. If your child is on any medication, ensure you take a prescription with you.

Use a large dressing to avoid getting sand near the stoma site as this can irritate the skin.

How do I care for my child's tube if it is not being used for feeds/medication?

The tube must be flushed at least once a day with a minimum of 20mls of water (sterile if the child is below one year of age).

This leaflet is available in audio, Braille, large print and other languages. To request a copy, please telephone 01270 612071.



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What is a gastrostomy?

A gastrostomy is defined as a surgical opening through the stomach (abdominal) wall through which a tube can be passed to deliver nourishment, liquid or medication.

Why is a gastrostomy needed?

A gastrostomy is formed when adequate nutrition cannot be taken by mouth to achieve normal growth and development. A gastrostomy may be permanent for some children who have a chronic problem with feeding or temporary during an acute illness or after a surgical procedure.

A gastrostomy may be required in children where:

- There is impairment of normal sucking, chewing or swallowing mechanism e.g. children with cerebral palsy, neuro-degenerative conditions and oesophageal reflux
- The child has increased nutritional requirements e.g. liver disease, cystic fibrosis
- The child has poor weight gain associated with chronic illness e.g. malignancy, renal disease
- There is failure to thrive
- There are upper gastro-intestinal and anatomical abnormalities e.g. oesophageal atresia, trauma.

Types of gastrostomy tube

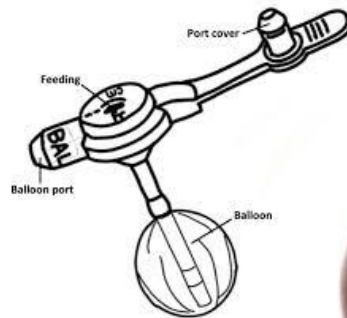
Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy (PEG)

Insertion and replacement of a PEG tube requires a general anaesthetic. The PEG can last between 12-24 months.



Buttons

Various types are available. They are held in place internally by inflation of a balloon with water, which is checked once a week. They are usually replaced every three to six months.



Gastrostomy tube

These can be made of silastic. Depending on the make and model they can last from three to six months. A Mic-Key G tube is secured internally by inflation of a balloon and externally by a device called a flange. Once a week the sterile water in the retention balloon is removed and replaced as it can be absorbed leading to deflation of the balloon and the tube could fall out or move internally. A PEG tube is not retained with water but an internal fixation device. The external fixation device on a PEG tube is referred to as a bar.

A feeding set is connected to the gastrostomy to deliver a feed solution or medication. This may be as a bolus (one at a time) or a continuous feed. Bolus sets should be changed every two weeks and in between each use the tubing should be washed with hot soapy water, rinsed and left to dry. Continuous feeding sets should be discarded 24 hours after first use.

