

Greenwich Hospital

What is a PEG (Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy) Tube?

PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

What is a PEG Tube?

A PEG tube is a feeding tube that is surgically inserted through the skin of the abdomen ("percutaneous") into the stomach ("gastrostomy"). A PEG tube may be used when an individual has difficulty swallowing. It may also be used when nutritional needs cannot be met by foods due to poor appetite and/or increased calorie needs. Sometimes PEG tubes are inserted as temporary nutritional support for patients who have had head and neck surgery.

How is the PEG tube inserted?

A physician trained in placing feeding tubes will insert the PEG tube. After you are mildly sedated and your throat is numbed, a special device called an endoscope is inserted in the mouth and guided into the stomach. The stomach is filled with air and the light from the endoscope indicates where the small incision is to be made for the PEG tube to be inserted. The tube is secured inside the stomach and on the abdominal wall to prevent it from moving after it is placed. The procedure takes about 20 minutes to complete.

How will my nutritional needs be met?

There are special formulas that are made for tube feedings. Your physician and dietitian will determine which formula is best for you, how much to have each day and how to deliver it through the tube. Formula may be delivered using a large syringe (bolus feeding), using a pump (continuous feeding), or by allowing the feeding to flow in by gravity. You will be given recommendations regarding the amount of water you need each day to prevent dehydration.

Formula and water should be given slowly through the tube to prevent cramping, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and bloating. You should be sitting upright during the feeding and after the feeding for 30 to 60 minutes to prevent reflux of fluid into the lungs.

Will I be able to eat and drink after the PEG tube is in place?

Every individual is different so discuss this with your physician. If you are able to swallow without choking you should be able to eat and drink after the tube is placed.

How do I take care of my PEG tube?

- Wash your hands with soap and water before handling your feeding and PEG tube.
- Rinse the tube with water before and after feedings and medications to prevent blockages; if using continuous feedings, flush the tube every 4 to 8 hours or as directed by your doctor.
- Clean the skin (called the stoma) around the tube as directed by your physician or nurse.
- Each day check the skin around the stoma for redness, swelling and leakage; report these immediately to your doctor.
- Each day check the mark on the tube drawn by your physician which indicates the tube is properly in place.

When should I call my health care provider?

You should call your health care provider if:

- The tube becomes clogged and you cannot flush it.
- The tube comes out or is not properly placed.
- There is more drainage around the stoma than usual and/or the drainage is coffee ground color, bloody or has a foul smell.
- The skin around the stoma is reddened, swollen, tender, warm to the touch, or has drainage around the stoma.
- Fever more than 101 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Weight loss of more than 2 pounds a week.
- Constipation for greater than 2 days.
- Diarrhea of more than 6 loose stools per day.
- Nausea and/or vomiting that last more than 24 hours.
- Bloating, distended, and/or tender stomach.

Your PEG tube feeding prescription is: _____

