Checking for Stomach Residuals

A stomach residual is the amount of liquid that stays in your stomach after a feeding. To make sure your stomach empties correctly, your doctor or dietitian may ask you to check your residual before each feeding. If your feeding formula has not moved through your stomach before your next feeding, you may have nausea, bloating or vomiting.

Stop your tube feeding 15 minutes before checking your stomach residual.

You may not need to check your stomach residuals at home. It is important to check with your doctor or dietitian first.

Supplies:

- A 60 mL or larger syringe
- A clean measuring cup marked in milliliters (mL)

How to Check Residuals

1. Gather your supplies
2. Wash your hands with soap and warm water.
3. If your feeding tube does not have a clamp, pinch the tube and open the cap at the end of the tube.
4. Put the tip of the syringe into the feeding tube with the plunger in the down position.
5. Gently pull back on the plunger of the syringe to pull out any liquid from your stomach. Do not use too much force or the tube may collapse.
6. Remove all stomach residual:
   - If your stomach is empty, you will not get any residual.
   - If your tube collapses even with gentle pressure, attach the tube to a drainage bag for 15 minutes to collect any residual.
   - If there is more residual than the syringe will hold:
     ▶ Pinch the tube
     ▶ Take the syringe out of the tube
     ▶ Put the fluid into a measuring cup
     ▶ Put the syringe back in the tube
     ▶ Pull out more residual fluid
     ▶ Repeat this until there is no more residual

7. Measure the amount of fluid in your syringe, measuring cup or collection bag. Keep a log of your residual amounts.

8. Put the residual fluid back down your tube.

9. Flush your tube with 30 mL of room temperature water.

10. Remove the syringe and clamp the tube or close the cap.

11. Wash your syringe, plunger and measuring cup with soap and warm water. Rinse well and air dry.

**Amount of Residual**

- You will be told the amount of residual that is okay for you to have before each tube feeding.
- If you have nausea, bloating or vomiting, call your doctor for directions about what you should do for this problem.