Home Care for Your Surgically Placed Gastrostomy Tube or G-Tube

Name of tube: ________________________ size: __________________

Type: __________________________________________________________________

Length of the tube outside of your upper body: ________________________

What is a G-tube?

A G-Tube is a flexible tube put into your stomach through your abdomen (belly). The tube is put in during surgery. This tube has one opening that leads to the stomach. Tube feeding can be given or stomach contents may be drained through the opening.

The tube is held in place either by:

- Stitches, with a mushroom-shaped plug at the end
- Tape

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

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Why is this tube used?
Your stomach tube is used to:
- Take fluids and gas out of the stomach
- Prevent nausea and vomiting
- Prevent pressure on inside stitches
- Give foods, liquids and medicines

How should I care for my skin around the tube?
1. Wash your hands with soap and water or use alcohol based hand sanitizer.
2. Clean around the tube where it goes into the skin. Use warm water and soap. Rinse with plain water.
3. Support the tube with a dressing or a tube holder.
4. If your skin becomes irritated, use a hair dryer on the cool setting to dry the area. Remove the cause of the irritation. Keep the skin clean and dry. Use a waterproof ointment, such as Desitin® or zinc oxide to protect your skin.
5. Gently loop the tube and tape it securely to your abdomen. This prevents the tube from being pulled out.

What if there is leaking around my tube?
- It is common to have a small amount of drainage around the area where the tube goes into your stomach.
- It is important to keep the tube stable. Too much movement of the tube can lead to leaking around the tube. Support your tube with a dressing or tube holder so that it moves as little as possible.
- Take these steps if you see an increase of drainage or if the drainage looks like stomach contents (green, yellow), feeding formula (white) or medicine:
  - Find the cause:
    1. Is your stomach too full?
      Check your stomach residual. Follow the advice from your doctor about the amount of residual this is okay for you.
2. Is your feeding or medicine going in too fast or are you giving too much at one time?
   Call your doctor. You may need to change the way you give the feedings.

3. Are you taking any medicine that slows down your stomach or bowel function?
   Call your doctor. Certain medicines slow down how your stomach and bowels work.

4. Are your bowels moving?
   Constipation may be caused by certain medicines or you may not be getting enough liquids or fiber. If you are constipated and bloated, fluid can back up into your stomach. Call your doctor if you are constipated.

5. Has your tube moved in or out more than one inch?
   Sometimes the tube may dislodge or move out of position. Call your doctor if the tube has moved out of place 1 inch or more.

   ▶ When you cannot control the leakage:
   • Call your doctor.
   • If the leakage is constant, stop the tube feeding and connect your tube to a drainage bag. You may use an empty container such as a milk carton if you do not have a drainage bag. Measure and record the amount of drainage. Also look at the color, odor and thickness of the drainage.
   • While your tube is connected to a drainage bag, do not take tube feeding or medicines. Call your doctor so changes can be made.

Please read the handout, Questions and Answers about Your Tube Feeding, for other questions or concerns.