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 gastrostomy tube, also called a G-Tube is a flexible tube put into your stomach through your abdomen during surgery. This tube has one opening that leads to your stomach. Tube feeding formula, fluids and medicines can be given through your G-Tube. Your stomach contents can also be drained through your tube.

A PEG tube is a common type of G-tube. Your tube is held in place either by stitches, with a mushroom-shaped rubber plug at the end, or tape.
Why is a G-tube used?
Your tube is used to:

- Take fluids and gas out of your stomach
- Give you foods, fluid and medicines
- Prevent nausea and vomiting
- Prevent pressure on inside stitches

How should I care for my skin around the tube?

1. Wash your hands with soap and warm water or use alcohol based hand sanitizer.
2. Clean your skin around the tube using soap, warm water, and a washcloth or cotton swab. Gently wash under the rubber plug, and clean the tube starting closest to your skin and working outward.
3. Rinse with water. Let the area dry completely. You may also choose to rinse off in the shower.
4. Secure the tube to your abdomen with a tube holder or tape. This stops your tube from moving.
5. When you are done, wash your hands with soap and warm water. Dry your hands well with a clean towel.
6. If your doctor or dietitian has told you to use a dressing, it is important to change it at least once every day or when it becomes wet or soiled.
7. You may have pledget stays or stitches in your skin around the tube site. Ask your doctor when and how these will be removed.
8. Call your doctor if your skin becomes irritated around your tube site. **Do not** use any ointment or alcohol-based products around your tube site unless your doctor tells you it is okay.

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 your tube from moving. Too much movement of the tube can lead to leaking around it. Support your tube with a dressing or tube holder so that it moves as little as possible.
• If you see an increase in leakage around your tube it is important to find the cause and call your doctor right away. Your doctor may tell you not to use your feeding tube. Some causes of leakage may include:
  ▶ Your stomach is too full – you may have severe nausea, bloating, abdominal pain, or fullness
  ▶ Your feeding formula or medicine is going in too fast or you are putting in too much at one time
  ▶ You are taking medicine that slows down your stomach or bowel function
  ▶ You are constipated
  ▶ Your tube has moved out of place – do not use your feeding tube.

• Call your doctor right away if:
  ▶ Your leakage smells bad
  ▶ Your leakage is green, yellow, red, or white in color
  ▶ You see blood in or around your tube

What if I am unable to control leakage around my tube?
• Call your doctor right away if you are unable to control the leakage.

• If your leakage is nonstop, do not use your tube 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. Have this information available when you call your doctor.

• While your tube is connected to a drainage bag, do not take tube feeding formula or medicines.

What if my tube is clogged?
It is important to flush your tube daily with 60 mL of water to keep it clear. If your tube is clogged, follow these steps:
1. Use warm water and a syringe to flush your tube. Move the plunger on the syringe in and out several times to clear the clog.
2. If you can see the clog, rub your fingers along the outside of the tube to break up the clog.
3. If your clog does not clear, **call your doctor right away**.
   - **Do not** use soda or pop to clear the clog.
   - **Do not** put anything into your tube to clear the clog.
   - Ask your doctor or dietitian about products that are available to clear clogs.

**It is important to only put formula and water into your feeding tube.** If you give medicine through your feeding tube, see the handout, *Giving Medicines Through Your Feeding Tube*.

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