

6 STEPS FOR TUBE CARE



A factsheet for adults and children

Hand Washing

Always wash your hands before and after care of device, and administration of feeds or medication (1)



- Refer to "hand hygiene" (1)
- Wet hands first under luke warm running water, apply liquid soap
- Rub all parts of the hands for at least 20 seconds ensuring that all surfaces of the hands and wrists are covered with soap
- Rinse hands under warm water, dry hands using paper towels

Washing syringes

- For reusable syringes, remove the syringe plunger and wash both portions thoroughly in warm, soapy water using washing up liquid
- Rinse under cold running water to remove the soapy water. Shake off any remaining water and air dry. If any residue present then re-wash. If unable to remove residue, dispose of the syringe
- Once dry, reassemble and place in a clean dry container
- Manufacturers guidance will provide information on how many uses per syringe



Tube care

- Different tubes require specific types of care
- Refer to local Trust policy/guidelines and manufacturer's instructions on aftercare instructions
- Inspect tube regularly and consult your healthcare professional if you have any concerns about aftercare, infection, tube blockages, the tube falling out or tube pulling
- If a stoma is present: refer to local policy on stoma care, check regularly and keep clean. If advised ensure you advance and rotate your device
- If a dressing or cream is recommended, apply as prescribed
- Consult your healthcare professional if you experience new tissue growth, soreness, notice any redness or granuloma odour or have any increase in moisture or fluid in the area



To prevent tube blockage

Feeding tubes should be flushed with a minimum of 10–20ml (or as advised by your healthcare professional) of water, in line with Trust guidance*

- Feeding tube to be flushed before and after administration of feed and medication
- Each medication should be given separately, with a water flush between each medication dose
- Refer to the manufacturer guidance sheet for further advice specific to each enteral feeding device

* Freshly drawn tap water, or cooled boiled water for those with a weakened immune system, as per Trust policy and/or advice of healthcare professional. Patients who are on a fluid restriction may require less flushes and advice will be provided by their healthcare professional

To unblock a feeding tube

This advice does not apply to a nasogastric tube

- Try to flush the tube with warm water using a gentle push and pull motion with a syringe (3).
- If the tube is still blocked, flush again with cooled boiled water and leave for 20 minutes repeating the step above and refer to local hospital and home care company guidance
- Should the tube remain blocked, consult your healthcare professional e.g., dietitian, home enteral feeding nurse or phone the home care helpline for further advice
- You should never unblock a device by inserting something into the internal lumen of the tube

To clean a feeding pump

- Different pumps will have different methods of cleaning, so please refer to feeding pump manufacturer's instructions on how to clean your pump
- You should wipe clean your pump daily and remove any spilled feed quickly

- (1) NHS England. How to wash your hands. Accessed at: www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/
- (2) British Pharmaceutical Nutrition Group (BPNG). 2007. Handbook of Drug Administration via Enteral Feeding Tubes. Available at: www.rlandrews.org/pdf_files/handbk_of_enteralfeeding.pdf
- (3) BAPEN. 2013. Accessed at: www.bapen.org.uk/images/pdfs/rcp-ten-top-tips/nasogastric-tube-feeding-in-adults.pdf