



BSNA Factsheet from the EPSG for Adult & Paediatric patients

1. Hand washing: always wash your hands before and after care of device, and administration of feeds or medication¹
 - Refer to “hand hygiene” ¹.
 - Wet hands first under warm running water, apply liquid soap.
 - Rub all parts of the hands for at least around 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.

2. To prevent tube blockage^{2,3}
 - 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.
 - 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.

3. To unblock a feeding tube
 - Flush the tube with warm water using a gentle push and pull motion with a syringe³.
 - For a balloon feeding tube unblock by flushing with 10ml of warm water.
 - If the tube is still blocked, flush again with warm water and leave for 20 minutes repeating the step above.
 - 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 any instrument into the internal lumen of the tube.

4. Washing syringes

- For reusable syringes, remove the syringe plunger and wash both portions in warm, soapy water using washing up liquid. Alternatively, they can be washed in a dishwasher.
 - Rinse under cold running water to remove the soapy water. Shake off any remaining water and air dry.
 - Once dry, reassemble and place in a clean dry container.
 - Manufacturers guidance will provide guidance on how many uses per syringe.
- Tube care
 - Different tubes require specific types of care.
 - Refer to local Trust policy/guidelines and manufacturer instructions for use on aftercare instructions.
 - Inspect tube regularly and consult your Healthcare Professional if you have any concerns about aftercare, infection, tube blockages, tube fall or pull outs
 - 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 soreness or notice any redness or granuloma
 - To clean a feeding pump
 - Different pumps will have different methods of cleaning, so please refer to manufacturer's instructions.
 - You should wipe clean your pump daily and remove and feed spillages.

** For hospitals freshly drawn tap water or sterile water if immunocompromised as per NHS trust policy. Patients who are on a fluid restriction may require less flushes and advice will be provided by their HCP.*

References

1. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/>
2. British Pharmaceutical Nutrition Group, 2003
3. https://www.bapen.org.uk/pdfs/d_and_e/de_pract_guide.pdf

This fact sheet is a general guide, and not intended as a comprehensive training package on all aspects of tube blockages, washing syringes, stoma, tube and pump care.

It is recommended that patients/ carers demonstrate competency in line with your trust guidelines and or manufacturer guidelines, on tubes and their use.