

# TUBE FEEDING YOUR BABY

Your baby is currently receiving nasogastric tube feeds (gavage feeds), and may also be having some suck feeds. We would like you to learn how to tube feed your baby so that you are able to do this while your baby is in hospital and if you choose to at home until he/she no longer needs tube feeds. Once at home many babies will suck feed more quickly because you are there all of the time to respond to them. We will show you the things that you need to learn in order to give your baby a tube feed, and work with you until you are comfortably able to do this without supervision. Your baby will have individual feeding needs and we will work with you in determining an appropriate feeding plan before you leave the hospital.

## **Will we be given supplies?**

Before you go home we will ensure that you have enough supplies.

## **What do we need to know?**

The following are important things that you need to remember about tube feeding.

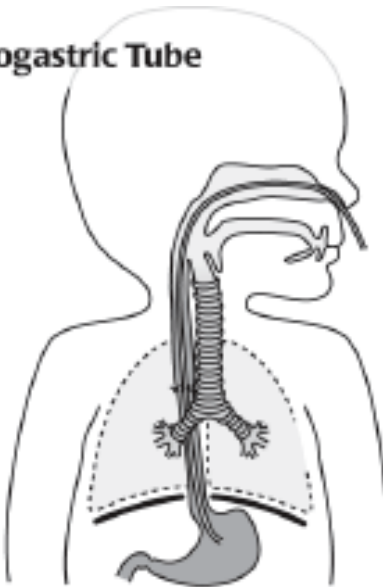
- NEVER leave your baby unattended during a tube feed
- If your baby has any colour change or difficulty in breathing during a tube feed, STOP the feed immediately by pinching the tube. Then recheck the tube position, and/or contact the NAPSS team or the Centre for Newborn Care
- If your baby vomits during the feed, stop the feed and wait 15-20 minutes. Recheck the tube position and if this is OK, then restart the feed again.
- If the tube dislodges during the feed, STOP the feed, remove the tube and contact the NAPSS team or Centre for Newborn Care
- Keep a list of emergency contact numbers by your telephone. The Canberra Hospital Special Care Nursery team leader is available 24 hours – Phone 6142 6332
- Babies on tube feeds sometimes have excess mucous in their nostrils, particularly the one with the tube. If this is a problem please discuss this with the NAPSS team
- We will review your baby's feeding plan with you at each NAPSS visit, based on weight gain and your baby's feeding behaviour
- When your baby no longer requires tube feeds, you may have some supplies left over. These will be useful for other parents in your situation, so please return the bag for cleaning and recycling.

## **How do we give our baby a tube feed?**

The following are the steps to follow to give your baby a tube feed.

- Wash your hands
- Gather all of the necessary equipment, including a 30 and a 3 ml syringe, litmus paper, stethoscope and warmed milk
- Wrap your baby, ensuring that the baby's arms are wrapped securely

## Nasogastric Tube



<http://www2.hull.ac.uk/newsandevents-1/newsarchive/2010newsarchive/dec/feedingtubeprject.aspx>

- Check the tube position
  - Check that the mark on the tube is still at the baby's nostril and earlobe
  - Ensure that the tube is securely taped
  - Place the stethoscope over your baby's stomach, with the earpieces of the stethoscope in your ears. Fill the 3 ml syringe with 1-2 mls of air, attach the syringe to the end of the tube and quickly depress the plunger. Listen for a "pop" or "bubble" as the air enters your baby's stomach
  - Gently aspirate the tube using the 3 ml syringe. Any fluid aspirated should be checked by placing a drop on the litmus paper. Fluid from the stomach which is acidic will turn the blue litmus paper pink
  - If you are not sure of the tubes position, DO NOT proceed with the feed – call the NAPSS team during business hours or Special Care Nursery at the Canberra Hospital Phone No. 6142 6332. A nasogastric tube can be resited in the Special Care Nursery at any time of day or night.
- Commence the feed
  - Attach the barrel of the 30 ml syringe to the end of the tube, fill the syringe with warm milk, EBM or formula, gently depress the plunger into the top of the syringe to commence flow of milk, then remove the plunger
  - Fill the barrel with warm breast milk or formula
  - Allow the milk to flow into the baby's stomach by gravity, topping up the barrel as required
  - The tube feed should take around 15-20 minutes
  - You may give your baby a dummy to suck during the tube feed, if you wish
- Complete the feed
  - Flush the tube with 1-2 mls of cooled, boiled water, to clear milk from the tube
  - Replace the stopper at the end of the tube
  - Discard any unused milk
  - Place your baby on his/her back to sleep (as per SIDS guidelines)
  - Complete your feeding diary with details of the time and amount of feed

If you have any further questions please ask the medical and nursing staff.

Approved by Canberra Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, 2012  
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