

A Patient's Guide to Getting Medicine Through a Feeding Tube

Getting the nutrition you need through a feeding tube can improve quality of life. Frequently, the tube is also used for giving medicine. Here are some general tips and specific information about a few common medicines that you may find helpful. You should consult your pharmacist, physician, dietitian or nurse for specific information about the medication that you take.

Giving medications through feeding tube

- Medicines may clog a feeding tube. Follow these guidelines to decrease the chance of a clog and to get the most benefit from your medicine.
- Use a syringe to give diluted medications through the feeding tube.
- Never mix medication with tube feeding formula.
- Never mix medications together unless your doctor advises you differently.
- Do not crush time-released medications or enteric-coated medications. The letters CD, CR, CRT, LA, SA, SR, TR, XL, or XR usually indicate time release medications. The words Chronotab, Duratab, Extentab, Gradumet, Repetab, Sequel, Spansule, Tembid, Timecaps, or Timespan also indicate time release. The letters EC stands for enteric coated.
- Only some sublingual medicine, medicine that is absorbed from the cheeks or lozenge type medicine may be suitable to go through a feeding tube, check first.
- Ask your doctor where the tip of the feeding tube resides. This is important for drug administration. The stomach can tolerate more drugs than areas in the intestine, jejunum or duodenum.
- Use liquid medications when possible, but these may need to be diluted (1 part medicine to 4–5 parts water) before infusing to avoid stomach upset or diarrhea. If the tip of the tube is past the stomach, dilute with 8 to 10 parts water.
- Many liquid medications are thick and cling to feeding tube walls. Rinse well before and after to prevent this from happening.
- Crush tablets to a fine powder and mix well in 10 to 15 ml of warm water. If the tip of the tube is past the stomach, dilute with 20 to 30 ml of water. Let the mixture sit for two minutes prior to putting it down the tube and mix again before giving the medicine.
- Clear feeding tube by rinsing with 1–2 Tablespoonfuls (20 to 30ml) of warm water before and after each medication.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist if the medication needs to be given on a full or empty stomach. **This is only important if you are giving yourself tube feedings several times a day using a syringe as a funnel (bolus). Then consider the tube feeding to be a meal.**

TAKE THE FOLLOWING MEDICATION AT THE SAME TIME AS A FOOD BOLUS.

Advil	Cytotec	Mevacor
Naprosyn	Sinemet	Ticlid
Vantin	Aspirin	Feldene
Mexitil	Potassium	Steroids
Tonocard	Vibramycin	Ceftin
Macrochantin	Motrin	Parlodel
Tagamet	Toradol	Voltaren

TAKE THE FOLLOWING MEDICATIONS AN HOUR BEFORE A FOOD BOLUS.

Bumex	Lorabid	Zithromax
Carafate	Hismanol	Tetracyline
Dyazide	Lasix	Fosamax
Erythrocin (E.stearate)	Penicillin & derivatives	Isoniazide (INH) Ciprofloxacin

Recommendations for specific medications and tube feeding (TF)

- If holding tube feeding for medication, check with the dietitian, physician, nurse or pharmacist about increasing your tube feeding rate to get all your nutrition.

Cipro (ciprofloxacin)

- Administration of this medication through a feeding tube, using a syringe, may produce different results than taking it by mouth.
- Rinse your feeding tube well before and after administration of ciprofloxacin.
- Do not allow drug to have contact with other medications or tube feeding.

Dilantin (phenytoin)

- Do not use opened capsule.
- Decreased absorption with enteral feeding may result in decreased serum levels (50–75%).
- Your health provider needs to check drug levels. They may ask you to hold enteral feeding for 1–2 hours before and after phenytoin or adjust your dose.
- If you have a jejunostomy tube, your phenytoin may be administered as a suspension.

Tegretol (carbamazepine)

- Because you have a feeding tube, your dose of this medication may need to be adjusted more frequently. Especially if you have a jejunostomy tube.

Coumadin Tablets (Warfarin)

- Warfarin requires careful and consistent medication administration to maintain levels. Monitoring of blood clotting is also necessary. It is important that the method of administration is the same every time to keep the amount absorbed the same. Small changes in amount of medication absorbed can produce decreased benefit from the medication and increase side effects.
- Warfarin is most often prescribed as a tablet and must be crushed and mixed into slurry for administration into a feeding tube.
- It is extremely important to flush your feeding tube following warfarin to minimize interaction with the tube. Special care is needed to reduce this interaction.
- Some experts advise holding nutrition formulas for 1–2 hours before and after warfarin to avoid interactions. Not all experts agree in the nature of the interaction or the need to hold nutrition. In many cases adequate dilution and rinsing will avoid this interaction.

Synthroid, Levothroid (levothyroxine)

- An animal study suggested that protein intake alters serum levels of levothyroxine. Your doctor should check your thyroid function periodically.

There may be interactions and incompatibilities between your prescribed medications and any herbal products, over the counter medications or nutrition supplements that you are taking. Check with your physician or pharmacist prior to continuing to use them.

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