



What do you do if your feeding tube clogs?

To avoid clogged feeding tubes:

Flush vigorously using pulsating pressure.

- ◆ Always flush the tube immediately before and after feeding with at least 30 mL (1 ounce) of water.
- ◆ Never mix medicine with tube feeding unless advised to do so by your healthcare practitioner.
 - Flush tube with at least 30 mL of water before and after all medications.
 - Flush tube with at least 5 mL water **between** each medication if more than one is given.
- ◆ Request liquid versions if available; be aware that some liquid preparations can cause diarrhea due to sorbitol content.
- ◆ Crush medicine to a fine powder and disperse in 5 mL of warm water. Always check with your pharmacist first to be sure it is okay to crush a particular medicine.
 - Crush with mortar and pestle (see "Medications for your PEG tube" handout) or other pill crushing device
- ◆ Never crush an enteric-coated, time-released, or sustained-release tablet or capsule.
- ◆ Never mix fiber supplement with tube feeding formula unless instructed.
- ◆ Flush tube with at least 30 mL water before and after fiber supplement administration, if used.

What to do when your tube is Clogged!

- ◆ Warm water is usually effective.
 - 60 mL syringe filled with **lukewarm** water
 - Do not try to force the water in, gently and firmly push and pull the plunger back and forth.
 - Clamp the tube for 20 minutes allowing the water to "soak," repeat if necessary.

For more information see:

- ◆ Barnadas G. *Navigating Home Care: Enteral Nutrition – Part One*. Practical Gastroenterology 2003; XXVII(10):13. Available at: www.ginutrition.virginia.edu under the Practical Gastroenterology Series.
- ◆ *Coping Well with Home Enteral Nutrition* - Words of wisdom from resilient adult consumers @ www.copingwell.com/copingwell/HENCopingManual.pdf .

****We advise against using anything else such as carbonated beverages or meat tenderizer to unclog your tube. Clinical studies have not shown them to be effective.**

Updated 12-10 LK/CRP