

# Tube Feedings at Home

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## *Gravity Method*

### **How to perform a feeding**

1. Clean your work area. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Gather these supplies:
  - Formula
  - Feeding bag
  - IV pole
  - One \_\_\_\_\_ ml syringe
  - Clean cup of drinking water (lukewarm)
3. If using liquid formula, wipe the top of the can or carton with a damp cloth. Check the expiration date (sometimes called “use-by” date). If the date has passed, throw the formula away.
4. Wash and rinse your hands well.
5. Shake the container well or prepare powdered formula as ordered.
6. Close the roller clamp on the feeding bag (roll down).
7. Remove the cap from the bag. Pour the formula into the top of the bag (not into the side pocket). Replace the cap.
8. Hang the bag on the pole. The bag should be at least 2 feet above your shoulder.
9. Open the roller clamp (roll up).
10. Let the tubing fill with formula, then close the roller clamp (roll down).
11. Check tube placement, if your nurse asks you to.
12. Draw up \_\_\_\_\_ ml of lukewarm water into the syringe.
13. Insert the syringe into the feeding tube. Flush the tube (slowly push the water in).
14. Hook the feeding bag to your feeding tube. Tape the place where they connect, if needed.
15. Open the roller clamp and allow about one hour for the feeding. You can go slower or faster as you wish.
  - Use the roller clamp to slow the rate or turn it off.
  - If you turn it off for more than 10 minutes, flush your feeding tube before restarting. Use a syringe with \_\_\_\_\_ ml of water. This prevents the tube from getting plugged.
16. Always sit upright (or partly upright) during the feeding and for at least an hour afterward.

17. When the feeding is complete, flush your tube with \_\_\_\_\_ ml of lukewarm water. This is very important. It gives you extra fluids and keeps your tube from getting plugged.

- If you flush with more than 60 ml of water, you may want to add it to the feeding bag. Afterward, you will still need to flush with a syringe filled with 30 ml of water. This will clear the formula from your tube.

**Formula schedule:**

Start: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \_\_\_\_\_ Finish: \_\_\_\_\_  
Start: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \_\_\_\_\_ Finish: \_\_\_\_\_  
Start: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \_\_\_\_\_ Finish: \_\_\_\_\_  
Start: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \_\_\_\_\_ Finish: \_\_\_\_\_  
Start: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \_\_\_\_\_ Finish: \_\_\_\_\_

**Water schedule:** Give lukewarm water by syringe or in the feeding bag. This gives you extra fluids and keeps your tube from getting plugged.

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \_\_\_\_\_  
Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \_\_\_\_\_  
Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \_\_\_\_\_  
Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \_\_\_\_\_  
Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

**Tips**

- Store open cans of formula in the refrigerator.
  - Label the cans with the date and time they were opened.
  - Throw them away after 24 hours. (Recycle empty formula cans.)
- Formula from a can or carton can hang for 12 hours. Formula mixed from powder can hang for 4 hours.
- If you have trouble with the flow, squeeze the drip chamber to help it get started. If you still have trouble, use a new feeding bag.

- Feeding bags can be used for 2 to 3 days. Rinse with lukewarm water between feedings. At the end of the day, clean the bag well. Here's how:

1. Close the roller clamp. Add a couple of drops of dish detergent and warm water to the bag. Squeeze the bag to mix in the soap.
2. Open the roller clamp. Let the soapy water flow out of the bag and tubing.
3. Refill the bag with water. Let the water run through the bag and tubing for a final rinse.
4. Store the bag (with roller clamp open) in a clean plastic bag in the refrigerator.

- Wash the syringes and other equipment each day.
- Weigh yourself 2 times a week on \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

***If you will take medicine through your feeding tube:***

- Try to use liquid medicines. Mix liquid medicine with an equal amount of water.
- If your medicine comes as a pill, ask your doctor or pharmacist if it can be crushed. (Some drugs will harm you if crushed.) If it's safe to crush your medicine:
  1. Crush it into to a fine powder.
  2. Mix it with 20 to 30 ml of water.
  3. Draw the mixture up into a syringe.
  4. Flush the tube with \_\_\_\_\_ ml of water.
  5. Inject the medicine into the tube.
  6. Add a little water to rinse your medicine cup. Inject this water into the tube.
  7. Flush the tube with \_\_\_\_\_ ml of water.