

Having a nasogastric (NG) feeding tube inserted

Nutrition and Dietetics
Information for Patients

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What is a nasogastric (NG) feeding tube?

A nasogastric feeding tube is a narrow tube which is placed into your nose and down into your stomach. The tube can be used to give you fluids, nutrition and medications.

How is the tube inserted?

The tube will normally be inserted by a nurse on the ward. It will take about 15 minutes to do. You will be asked to sit upright if you can. The nurse will carefully place the tube into your nose and down through your oesophagus (gullet) into your stomach. This can be unpleasant but should not be too uncomfortable.

The nurse will then try to withdraw some fluid from the tube to test the pH (acid) and make sure the tube is in the correct position. You might need a chest X-ray to confirm that the tube is safe to be used.

The tube will be secured to your cheek with a clear dressing.

What are the risks?

Inserting a nasogastric tube does come with possible risks.

The tube could become misplaced into the lungs when it is inserted or move into the wrong place afterwards. To make sure the tube is in the correct position the nurse will check the pH levels in your stomach on a regular basis.

There may be some slight bleeding from your nose after the tube is inserted. The nurse will help you with this if this happens.

What feed will I get?

If the NG tube is to be used for nutrition, you will get a prescribed, commercially prepared feed. Your dietitian will prescribe the volume and feed to suit your needs. The feed will be given through an infusion pump or syringed into the NG tube.

Can I still eat and drink with a NG tube?

This will depend on why you have the NG tube. If needed, a speech and language therapist will assess if your swallowing is safe. Your doctor, nurse or dietitian will be able to advise you.

Will I be able to move around?

When you are having your feed, the pump and feed will hang on a mobile drip stand that can be taken with you should you need to leave your bedside area. When you are not having your feed you will be free to move around without having to take the drip stand with you.

Will I be able to have a bath or shower?

You will be able to have a bath or shower. Make sure that the caps on the end of the tube are closed. Make sure any dressings used to keep the tube in place are secure and dried thoroughly or replaced afterwards.

Will my bowel habits change?

This will depend on why you have the NG tube and your medical condition. Some people who are unable to eat and drink and get all their nutrition through the NG tube have problems going to the toilet (diarrhoea or constipation). We will monitor you closely.

Can I still take my medicines?

Where possible your medicine will need to be in liquid form to be given through the tube. If you are able to swallow safely you will be able to take your medicine as you would normally.

How long will I need the tube for?

How long you need the tube for will depend on why you need the tube and your condition. Your doctor, nurse or dietitian will be able to give you an idea of how long you will need the NG tube for. Once the NG tube is no longer needed, a qualified nurse will remove it by gently pulling it out.

Contact details

Please feel free to ask your doctor, nurse or dietitian if you have any questions.

You can contact the dietitians on 0116 258 5400.

Where can I find more information?

The support group 'Patients on Intravenous and Naso-gastric Nutrition Treatment (PINNT)' has a website for all patients and their carers, as well as healthcare professionals: www.pinnt.com

Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice
Visit www.uhleicester.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals.
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net

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 જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો.

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net

We are a research hospital and you may be asked to take part in research