

Prevention and Management of a Blocked PEG Tube

A gastrostomy tube (also called a G-tube) is a tube inserted through the abdomen that delivers nutrition directly to the stomach. It is used when service users are finding it difficult with eating to get the fluid and calories they need to stay healthy.

A Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy (PEG) feeding tube is one the most commonly used. They are made of polyurethane or silicone, which are suitable for long-term use. A flange, dome or inflated balloon anchors the tube in place on the inside and prevents the leakage of gastric juices or food.

Aim

The purpose of these guidelines is to offer direction on how to prevent a blockage in a gastrostomy tube to an individual with a PEG and in the event of a blockage, offer guidance on how to manage it.

Scope

These guidelines refer to all services where gastrostomy tubes are used by individuals using myhomecare services and managed by myhomecare staff.

Responsibility and Training

- It is the responsibility of all staff involved in the management of gastrostomy tubes to be familiar with and adhere to these guidelines. It is the responsibility of managers to ensure staff are familiar with the standard procedure and to monitor compliance.
- Nursing staff will have completed a recognised training course (within last 2 years) and three clinical/competency assessments in this area
- Nursing staff who have received instruction, and have their competency assessments up to date, may instruct other staff on the management of gastrostomy tubes in line with myhomecare standard procedures and guidelines.
- Nursing staff who have received training and instruction every two years may administer medications via gastrostomy tubes and will have completed the Medication Management provided by HSEland.ie and will adhere to medication management standard procedures and guidelines in line with Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice Framework.
- Training should be client specific, according to the individual clients' needs in the community. Delegation of care is the responsibility of the Nursing Manager undertaking staff assessment.
- The nurse has an obligation to practice according to the legislation and professional codes of practice governing nursing and midwifery practice, and to the current standards, policies and guidelines of An Bord Altranais and myhomecare.
- As well as an obligation to practice according to legislation, nurses should have adequate knowledge of gastrostomy tube management.

- Nurses should also:

- Ensure that their competencies, skills and practices are up to date.
- Acknowledge any limitations in competence, refusing in such cases, and accepting delegated or assigned functions.
- Seek support, assistance and training from myhomecare, where necessary, for continued professional development to maintain competence in gastrostomy tube management.

Guidelines

PEG tubes can easily become blocked with feed or medications. Staff will adhere to standard precautions, hand hygiene

To prevent blockage:

- Try to use the liquid form of prescribed medications.
- Ensure that medications are finely crushed and mixed with an appropriate amount of solution.
- Flush the tube pre and post the administration of each medication and pre and post each feed.
- Flush the tube regularly with adequate amounts of water to prevent a build up of feed in the tube.

In the event of the tube getting blocked:

- Turn off the feed.
- Check that all clamps are open and tubes are not kinked.
- Attempt to flush the tube with tepid water, do not use excessive pressure.
- Flush with a solution of carbonated water via syringe. Leave for 30 minutes with the solution in the tube.
- If it remains blocked, gently squeeze the tube between your fingers along the length of the tube.
- Flushing with sugary drinks is not recommended.
- Never insert anything into a blocked tube.
- If these techniques are not successful in clearing the blockage, the tube may need to be replaced. Consult promptly with a lead clinical person.
- Report any concerns to the family or Nursing Manager

Important

- If there are leaks of fluid, pain on feeding or new bleeding, stop immediately and contact G.P, family member, ambulance.
- Wind/back pain: Open the cap on the tube and let excess gas escape through the tube
- If the PEG tube accidentally falls out, put a dressing over the site and contact family member, ambulance, GP. It will have to be replaced as soon as possible, as the stoma will begin to close up.

References

- Clinical Resource Efficiency Support Team (2004.) Guidelines for the Management of Enteral Tube Feeding in Adults. www.crestni.org.uk
- Gastrostomy Tube and Aftercare 2008, Best Practice, NHS Scotland.
- Home Tube Feeding Guide 2011, patientcare.ireland@nutricia.com