



danuTips for Enteral Care

Avoiding & Troubleshooting Tube Clogs

Dealing with clogs in gastrostomy tubes at home can be challenging, but understanding the causes and knowing effective solutions can make a big difference. Here are some insights and practical tips to help maintain clear and functional feeding tubes.

Why Do Gastrostomy Tubes Clog

- ✦ **Medication Residue:** Some medications, especially if they are crushed and mixed together or undissolved when administered, can result in a tube obstruction.
- ✦ **Improper Flushing:** Insufficient flushing can leave residual food, formula, or medication in the tube.
- ✦ **Thicker Formulas infused via pump:** High-viscosity formulas are more likely to clog a feeding tube when infused slowly.

Preventing Tube Clogs:

✓ Remember Your “Water Sandwich”:

Flush the tube with at least 20 ml of warm water before and after feedings and medication administrations.

✓ Take Extra Care with Pump Feeding:

Pump fed patients should receive a manual/syringe flush at regular intervals throughout the day, especially with smaller bore tube sizes and nutrient dense formulas containing fiber.

✓ Use Appropriate Form of Medication Through the Tube:

Consult with a pharmacist to evaluate if crushable tablets or liquid medications are an option.

Troubleshooting a Clogged Tube:

✗ Warm Water Flush:

Use a syringe to gently push warm water through the tube. Take your time and allow the warm water to soak the clog. Then, apply a gentle but firm back-and-forth motion with the plunger of the syringe to help dislodge the clog.

✗ Manual Manipulation:

Carefully massage the tube between your fingers to dislodge or break up the blockage.

✗ Enzymatic Declogging Agents:

Consider using an enzyme solution to break down a stubborn clog.

Disclaimer: This information is not a substitute for professional medical care. In case of problems, complications, or questions, always contact your medical professional.

References:

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