

Care of Your PEG Tube

What is a PEG tube?

PEG stands for Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy, a flexible feeding tube that is placed through the abdominal wall and into your stomach.

Why am I getting a PEG tube?

A PEG tube can be helpful or necessary if:

- you have trouble swallowing or are not able to take in enough nutrition through your mouth
- you cannot eat, or if you have no appetite
- you need decompression (letting the extra air/fluid out of your stomach if your bowel is blocked)

What is the procedure to place a PEG tube?

- Sedation is used; general anesthesia is not usually needed. Sedation medication is given intravenously (by IV) and helps you feel relaxed or sleepy.
- Your doctor will pass a flexible tube (endoscope) through your mouth and down into your stomach.
- Through a camera on the endoscope, your doctor can see the inside of your stomach, and determine the best place to insert the PEG tube.
- A small cut will be made through the skin and abdominal wall. The PEG tube will be placed through this opening and into your stomach.
- On the inside, the PEG tube is held in the stomach by a balloon that is inflated with sterile water.
- On the outside there will be bumpers or buttons (also called T-fasteners) that help hold the stomach up against the abdominal wall.
- There will be 6 -12 inches of tubing visible on the outside, with a cap at the end. Around the tubing is a plastic disc called a flange. The disc is close to your skin, but it should not be tight against the skin.
- When you go home, we will give you a prescription for pain medication.

How do I care for a PEG tube?

A dressing will be placed on the PEG site after the procedure. **Change this dressing in 24 hours.**

- Always wash your hands with soap and water for 1 - 2 minutes before taking care of your feeding tube.
- ✓ Remove the old dressing first.
- ✓ Take a shower every day and wash around the PEG tube with soap and water. If you are not able to shower, just clean around the PEG tube every day.

- ✓ If you have crusting that does not come off with soap and warm water, use cotton swabs and hydrogen peroxide to remove it. **You must wash the peroxide off your skin when you are done.**
- ✓ Dry the skin thoroughly and apply a new dry sterile dressing over the tube insertion site every day after cleaning.
- ✓ Do not take a tub bath for 3 weeks after your PEG tube has been placed.
- The **bumper** T-fasteners are removed after 21 days. Make sure you have a follow up appointment to remove the bumpers. If not, please call for an appointment.
- The **button** T-fasteners will fall off after 3-4 weeks. If they do not fall off on their own, call for an appointment to have them removed.
- Reddish tissue, also known as granulation tissue, may develop around the tube. It may cause bleeding, tenderness, or excessive pus-like secretions. This tissue can be trimmed down during a clinic visit using chemical cautery. Chemical cautery uses silver nitrate to destroy the unwanted tissue and seal off blood vessels to stop bleeding.

To prevent your tube from getting clogged

- ✓ Flush the tube with 60cc (2 ounces) of room temperature tap water twice a day (every 12 hours) **and** before and after each feeding or liquefied medication given through the PEG tube.

What should I know about feedings?

- ✓ While you are here to have your PEG tube placed, a Registered Dietitian (RDN) will do a full nutrition assessment and review instructions about liquid nutrition through your PEG tube.
- ✓ After the first 24 hours, you may put liquefied medications and/or liquid nutrition through the PEG tube by using a large syringe. (Your doctor may give you instructions to use it sooner.) You will be given a demonstration and complete instructions.
- ✓ A PEG tube does NOT prevent you from eating/drinking by mouth, but your doctor may limit how much you take by mouth because of a medical treatment or condition.
- ✓ Avoid bacterial contamination - clean the top of the can with soap and water before pouring it into the syringe.
- ✓ Your tube-feeding formula does not need to be refrigerated unless it has been opened. If you are only using 1/2 can or bottle, then cover the remaining formula and refrigerate it until needed.
- ✓ You must sit up during the PEG tube feeding and for at least 30 minutes (1/2 hour) afterwards.
- ✓ Be sure to flush the PEG tube with 30-60cc (1-2 ounces) of water before and after you use your tube for feeding or medication.
- ✓ Tape the PEG tube to your abdomen to help prevent problems. Be sure the cap is facing up when you secure the tube. Do not tape the tube close to the circular flange or cause the flange to fit tight against the abdomen. If it is tight, the skin under the flange may break down and develop sores or ulcerations.
- ✓ Wash the feeding syringe with soap and water to keep it clean.

What should I know about feedings? (continued)

- ✓ The Nutrition Department can help you with questions and concerns about maintaining your hydration and nutrition with a PEG tube, but they cannot fill your prescription or give you a new prescription for your feeding supplies.
- ✓ Keep track of your feeding supplies. To get new supplies, at least one week before you will run out, contact:

_____ at _____

How and when is the PEG tube removed?

- PEG tubes can last for months or years, but it will need to be replaced if the balloon inside breaks or the tube splits. You and your doctor should discuss how long your tube will be in place.
- Your doctor or nurse practitioner can remove or replace the tube, with or without sedatives or anesthesia, in the clinic.

What complications should I watch for, and when should I call the doctor?

Call your doctor right away if you have:

- excessive or continuous bleeding at the puncture site on your abdomen
- pain at the PEG tube site that is not relieved by medication and that you would rate a 5 or higher on a scale of 10
- increased leakage from around the tube site, or if the tube becomes clogged and you cannot clear it
- any sign of infection at the PEG tube site: redness or warmth; swelling; thick, foul-smelling yellow or green drainage; tenderness; and/or a fever of 100.4° F (38° C) that persists longer than 24 hours
- nausea, gas, bloating, diarrhea, or constipation that lasts more than 24 hours
- vomiting that lasts more than 8 hours

What if the PEG tube falls out?

If the PEG tube falls out, please seek immediate attention. The tube must be replaced immediately (within a few hours) or the opening will close, and a new endoscopic PEG procedure may be required.

Try to put the (same) tube back into the hole. Tape it securely in place and call your Roswell Park Center/Clinic. If it is closed, call Roswell Park's main number: **716-845-2300**.

MIC-KEY Tubes

- In about 6-8 weeks, you may be able to choose to have your PEG tube changed to a low profile* tube. Call the GI clinic if you are interested.

* Low profile means the tube sits at skin level.

Where should I go if I need urgent care or if I have an emergency?

Our **Assessment and Treatment Center (ATC)** supports our current patients with immediate but non-life-threatening symptoms.

The ATC is open 24/7 but it is not a walk-in clinic. You will need a referral from your Roswell Park physician or the Roswell Park physician-on-call. If you are experiencing urgent (non-life threatening) symptoms, call your Roswell Park Center (example: GI, Breast, Leukemia Center). If your Center is closed, call Roswell Park at **716-845-2300** to be evaluated by a Triage Nurse.

If you feel you are in a life-threatening situation, call 911 immediately or go to the nearest hospital emergency room.

- ✓ Bring your Roswell Park “green card” (ID card) with you to the emergency room.
- ✓ Please notify your Roswell Park provider that you are in the emergency room or if you are admitted to the hospital.

Important Reminders

- The date of your procedure is _____
- You must have a driver accompany you, or your procedure will be cancelled.
- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight (not even gum or hard candy) the night before your procedure.
- You will be at Roswell Park for 2 to 4 hours after your procedure.

Stop these medications:

Take these medications:

If you have any questions or concerns, call _____