

# Having a nasogastric (NG) feeding tube inserted

Department of Nutrition & Dietetics

Information for Adult 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 and will take about 15 minutes. You will be asked to sit upright, if you are able to, and 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 attempt 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 of nasogastric tube insertion?

The insertion of a nasogastric tube does carry certain 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.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

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## **What feed will I receive?**

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

## **Can I still eat and drink with a nasogastric tube?**

This will depend on why you have the NG tube. If needed, a speech and language therapist will assess whether 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 receiving 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 but you should make sure that the caps on the end of the tube are closed and make sure that 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 receive all their nutrition via the NG tube have problems going to the toilet (either diarrhoea or constipation). You will be monitored closely.

## **Can I still take my medication?**

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

## **How long will I need the tube for?**

The length of time 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 further queries.

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](http://www.pinnt.com)

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Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

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