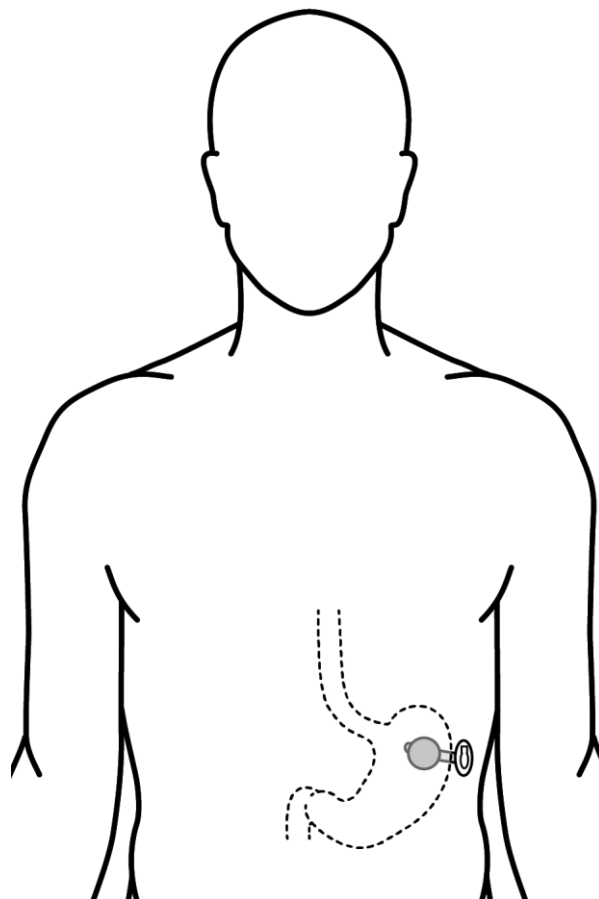


# Looking After Your Feeding Tube At Home

## Mic-Key™ Gastrostomy Tube

A Guidebook for You and Your Caregivers



## Introduction

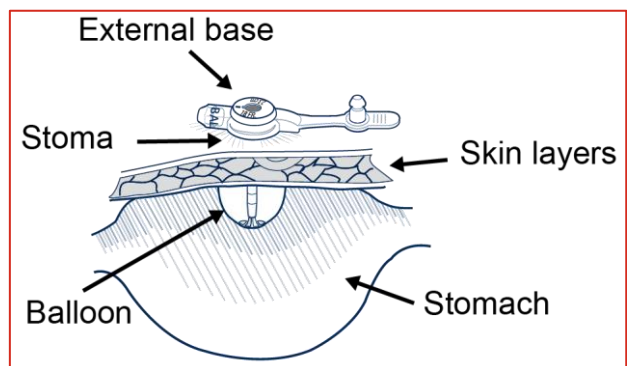
A gastrostomy tube (g-tube) is a way of giving food (pureed food or formula), water, and medicine directly into the stomach. A g-tube tube is used to keep your body healthy when you are not be able to eat or drink anything or enough.

You may have a g-tube if you:

- find it difficult or cannot chew or swallow
- do not feel hungry
- tire easily during mealtimes
- have muscle or nerve damage to your mouth or throat
- have an odd shaped throat

A doctor puts the g-tube through an opening made in the skin of your belly (abdomen) and into your stomach.

The opening in the skin is called a stoma.

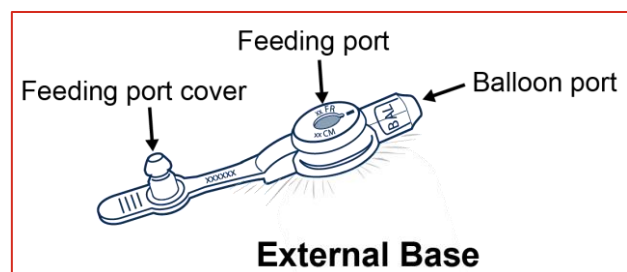


A balloon filled with water holds the g-tube in your stomach.

The external base, or base, holds the g-tube in place at the skin. There are 2 openings on the base called ports.

The balloon port is used to fill and empty the balloon.

The feeding port is used to give you food, fluids, and medicine.



## Caring for your skin and base

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Keep the skin around the stoma and the base clean and dry. This keeps your skin from getting red and sore (irritated) and forming blisters or wounds.

Bathing or showering will not hurt the stoma or base.

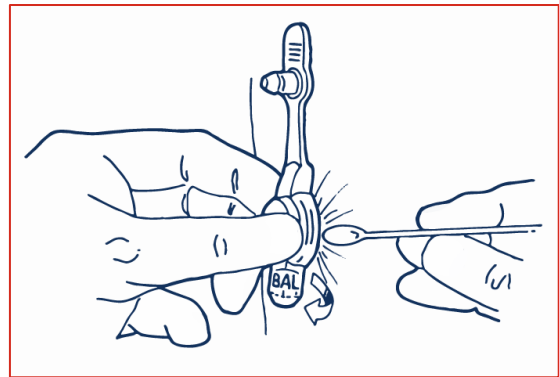
### Caring for your skin

Make sure the skin around the stoma is clean, dry, and healthy every time you use the g-tube.

Clean the skin once a day. Clean the skin more often if it is wet or there is crusting around the stoma. Wetness is caused by leakage of food, water, or medicine from the stoma or drainage around the stoma.

To clean the skin:

1. Wash your hands. Put on gloves if needed.
2. If you have a bandage, remove it and place in garbage.
3. Wet a soft clean cloth or cotton swab with warm water.
4. Gently hold the base steady.
5. Start cleaning closest to the base by wiping around the base in a circle and moving outwards.
6. Gently dry your skin with a soft clean cloth.
7. Turn the g-tube all the way around to keep the skin from sticking to the g-tube.



## **Caring for the base**

Make sure the base is clean and dry every time you use the g-tube.

The base should sit 2 to 3 mm above the skin – about the thickness of a dime. If the base is too tight or too loose, it will irritate the skin around the stoma.

Clean the base every day. Clean the base more often if there is drainage from the stoma site or leakage of food or medicine on the base.

To clean the base:

1. Wash your hands. Put on gloves, if needed.
2. Wet a soft clean cloth or cotton swab with warm water.
3. Gently clean the feeding port, balloon port, and base while holding the base steady.
4. Gently dry the base with a soft clean cloth.

## **Checking the balloon**

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Check how much water is in the balloon every 7 days or as directed by a nurse or doctor.

To check the how much water is in the balloon:

1. Set out 2 slip-tipped syringes.
2. Fill 1 syringe with the correct amount of water needed to fill the balloon. Use sterile, distilled, or boiled water that has cooled to room temperature.
3. Set this filled syringe aside.
4. Hold the base gently and firmly in place with one hand until the end of step 11.

5. Attach the 2<sup>nd</sup> empty syringe to the balloon port with your other hand. Let the syringe fill with the water from the balloon by itself until it stops.
6. Gently pull back on the plunger until it feels hard to pull back anymore.
7. Check how much water was pulled out from the balloon. It should be close to or the same amount as what was put in.
8. Hold the plunger in firmly while you remove the syringe from the balloon port. This stops the water from going back into the balloon.
9. Attach the syringe you filled in step 2 to the balloon port.
10. Slowly push the water into the balloon port.
11. Hold the plunger in firmly while you remove the syringe from the balloon port. This stops the water going back into the syringe.

The balloon could be leaking if less water comes out of the balloon than what was put in to fill it. Wait 10 to 20 minutes. Repeat the steps 1 to 11. The balloon is leaking if it has lost water again. It will need to be changed.

## **Possible problems**

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### **Leaking around the stoma**

It is normal to have a very small amount of leaking around the stoma.

To keep fluid from leaking around the stoma:

- Push fluids gently through the g-tube.
- Follow the rate directed by your dietitian.
- Make sure the balloon is filled with the correct amount of water.

If fluid keeps leaking, call your nurse.

**Irritated skin**

Your skin may get irritated around the stoma if the skin is wet or the base is too tight or loose on the skin. Irritated skin can heal by itself but sometimes it needs help.

To keep your skin from getting irritated:

- Check your skin often for wetness.
- Clean and dry the skin when it is wet.
- Call your nurse or doctor if the base is too tight or too loose against your skin.

If your skin is irritated:

- Ask your nurse or pharmacist to suggest a zinc cream.
- Call your nurse, pharmacist, or doctor anytime the skin gets worse.
- Call your nurse or doctor if your skin does not heal after 7 days of using zinc cream.

Do not put any creams or bandages around the stoma unless directed by your nurse, pharmacist, or doctor. They stop air from reaching the skin and could stop healing.

**G-tube falls out**

If your g-tube falls out, the stoma can close quickly. If you have been taught how, put in a new g-tube.

If you cannot put in a new g-tube:

- Cover the stoma with a clean gauze pad or cloth.
- Go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.
- Bring a new g-tube kit with you to the hospital.

## **Clogged or blocked g-tube**

If you are not able to flush the g-tube or push any food, water, or medicine through the g-tube, it might be clogged or blocked.

To check if the tubing is blocked, check there are no kinks or bends in the extension tubing and make sure the clamps on the tubing are open.

To keep your tube from getting blocked:

- Use liquid medicine when you can.
- Crush pills into a fine powder and make sure it is completely dissolved before giving them.
- Flush the g-tube before and after giving medicines.
- Give each medicine separately. Flush the g-tube between each medicine.
- Always follow the flushing schedule given to you by the dietitian.
- Flush at least every 8 hours if g-tube is not being used.
- Never put anything acidic in tube like cranberry juice or pop.

If the g-tube is clogged:

- Fill a large syringe with water.
- Attach the syringe to extension tube and fill it with water.
- Attach the extension tube to the feeding port.
- Pull back on plunger, then, push in the plunger.
- If you cannot push in the plunger, repeat last step.

If the g-tube is still clogged:

- Call pharmacist or your doctor for medicine that can be used to dissolve the clog.
- If it remains clogged or blocked, ask your nurse or doctor about changing your g-tube.

## Keeping track of my tube

Date first tube put in: \_\_\_\_\_

Tube length: \_\_\_\_\_ cm      Tube size: # \_\_\_\_\_ French

Balloon water amount: \_\_\_\_\_ mL

### Tube change every 3 to 6 months

Date changed	Size	Notes

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This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.

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