Giving Medicine through a Nasogastric (NG) Feeding Tube

Giving liquid medicines

Supplies:
- Stethoscope
- Pre-measured medicine in a syringe
- 2 empty 5 to 10 mL syringes
- Warm tap water for rinsing (flushing) tube

Step 1
- Draw up the prescribed amount of medicine into an empty syringe.

Step 2
Check NG tube placement. Make sure the end of the tube is still in the stomach, using the following two methods.
- Listen for air going into stomach. Use a 5 to 10 mL syringe to push 2 to 5 mL air into tube and listen over stomach with stethoscope for “whoosh” or “gurgle” sound.
- You may also look for stomach contents. Attach empty syringe to tube. Pull back on plunger until you withdraw greenish, tan, or white liquid from the stomach.

Step 3
Give medicine.
- Connect syringe filled with prescribed dose of medicine to NG tube and push all the medicine in until plunger stops.
- If the medicine is very sticky, you may draw up 2 to 5 mL of warm water into the medicine syringe. Gently shake the syringe to mix the water and remaining medicine, and push it again through the tube. This will help keep the tube from clogging.

Step 4
Flush medicine.
- Draw up 5 to 10 mL of warm water into an empty syringe. Connect water-filled syringe to NG tube and flush the tube. This can help keep the tube from clogging.
**Giving Medicine through a Nasogastric (NG) Tube**

**Giving tablet medicines**

**Supplies:**
- Stethoscope
- Pill crusher
- 2 empty 5 to 10 mL syringes
- Warm tap water for rinsing (flushing) tube

**Step 1**
Crush the tablet.
- Place the tablet in the pill crusher.*
- Firmly twist the pill crusher lid back and forth several times.
- Check to make sure the pill is thoroughly crushed. You should see no chunks of the tablet.
- Pour the crushed tablet into a small cup and mix with 5 to 10 mL of warm tap water.
- Make sure the tablet is fully dissolved in the water.
- Draw up all the water and tablet mixture into a syringe.

*Check with your pharmacy to see if the medicine can be compounded or crushed and mixed ahead of time.

**Step 2**
Check NG tube placement. Make sure the end of the tube is still in the stomach, using the following two methods.
- Listen for air going into stomach. Use a 5 to 10 mL syringe to push 2 to 5 mL air into tube and listen over stomach with stethoscope for “whoosh” or “gurgle” sound.
- You may also look for stomach contents. Attach empty syringe to tube. Pull back on plunger until you withdraw greenish, tan, or white liquid from the stomach.

**Step 3**
Give medicine.
- Connect syringe filled with prescribed dose of medicine to NG tube and push all the medicine in until plunger stops.

**Step 4**
Flush medicine.
- Draw up 5 to 10 mL of warm water into an empty syringe. Connect water-filled syringe to NG tube and flush the tube. This can help keep the tube from clogging.
Giving Medicine through a Nasogastric (NG) Tube

Troubleshooting the NG tube

Leaky connections

- If the NG tube is leaking around the connection site, try a new connector OR a new NG tube.
- If the caps on the tube are stretched out and opening by themselves, you can wrap them tightly in Coban to keep them closed.
- Have a nurse look at the tube to help you decide how to fix the leaky connection.

Clogged NG tube

- As soon as you notice any resistance flushing or giving medicines, try flushing the NG tube with 5 to 10 mL of warm water.
- If you are not able to flush any liquid into the tube, try pulling back on your syringe to see if you can get any liquid out.
- If you can’t flush or withdraw anything from the tube, call your child’s home care nurse or doctor.

Please call your child’s doctor for any of the following:

- Unable to hear a “whoosh” or “gurgle” when injecting air
- Unable to give medicines for any reason
- Child is not tolerating feeds
- Unable to flush the tube (clogged)
- Questions about which medicines can be given through a tube and whether a medicine can be compounded (the pharmacy crushes and mixes it for you)
- Any other questions or concerns

For more information
Cancer and Blood Disorders Center
206-987-2106