

Giving Medicine through a Nasogastric (NG) Feeding Tube

What type of medicine can I give my child through their NG tube?

Talk with your child's healthcare team before giving any medicine to your child. You may be able to give your child liquid medicine or tablet medicine by following the directions on the following pages.

Is it safe to feed my child through their NG tube?

It is very important to make sure your child's NG tube is inserted into your child's stomach before giving them medicine through their NG tube. See the handout PE3382 NG Tube Inserting Instructions for directions on how to insert an NG tube.

seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE3382.pdf

Check that the NG tube is placed correctly each time you give medicine. Use the methods that are checked off below.

Look method

Check that the permanent marker spot, made when measuring the tube, is at your child's nostril. If it is not, remove the tube and insert again. Make sure the tube has not moved each time you feed your child.

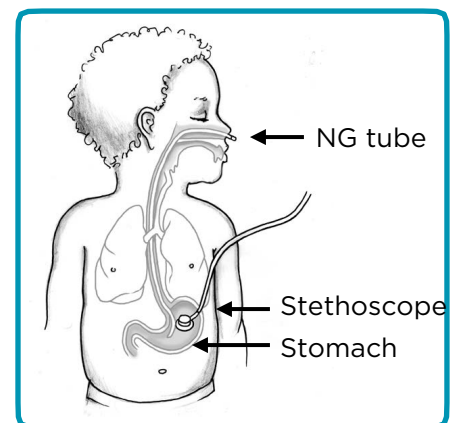
pH method

Pull out liquid from the tube by attaching an empty 10mL syringe to the tube and gently pulling back on the plunger. Test the liquid using a pH strip. Compare the color on the pH paper to the pH test strip chart. You will know that the tube is in your child's stomach if:

- The tube contents are a pH of 6 or less.
- The liquid is grassy-green or clear and colorless, with off-white to tan mucus shreds.
- If your child is taking an antacid or another medicine that decreases stomach acid, the pH may be higher than 6. Talk to your child's healthcare team about what to do if this is the case.

Auscultation method

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.



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To Learn More

- Nutrition
206-987-4758
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

Giving Medicine through an Nasogastric (NG) Tube

How do I give my child liquid medicine through their NG tube?

Wash your hands with warm water and soap before giving your child medicine.

Follow steps 1-4 for giving your child liquid medicine.

Collect supplies

- Stethoscope or pH paper
 - Pre-measured medicine in a syringe
 - 2 empty 5 to 10 mL syringes
 - Warm tap water for rinsing (flushing) tube
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Step 1

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

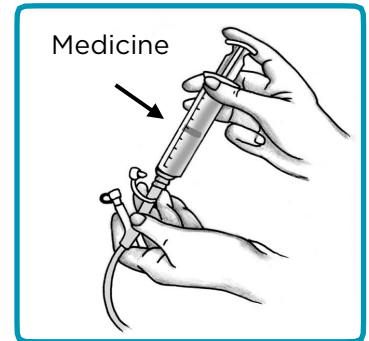
Step 2

Check NG tube placement. Make sure the end of the tube is still in the stomach using the methods on page 1.

Step 3

Give the medicine.

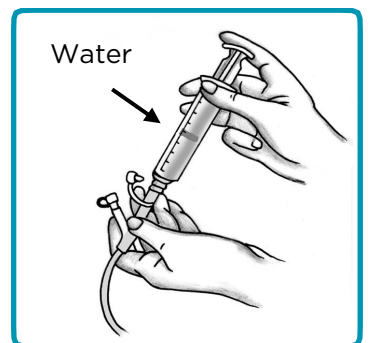
- Connect syringe filled with prescribed dose of medicine to NG tube and push all the medicine in until plunger stops.
- If the medicine is very sticky, you may draw up 2 to 5 mL of warm water into the medicine syringe. Gently shake the syringe to mix the water and remaining medicine and push it again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



Step 4

Flush the 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 an Nasogastric (NG) Tube

How do I give my child tablet medicine through their NG tube?

Wash your hands with warm water and soap before giving your child medicine.

Follow steps 1-4 for giving your child tablet medicine.

Collect supplies

- Stethoscope or pH paper
 - Pill crusher
 - 2 empty 5 to 10 mL syringes
 - Warm tap water for rinsing (flushing) tube
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Step 1

Crush the tablet.

- Check with your pharmacy to see if the medicine can be compounded or crushed and mixed ahead of time.
 - 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.
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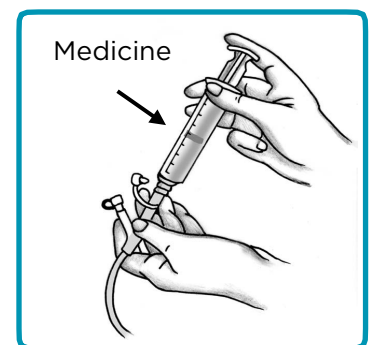
Step 2

Check NG tube placement. Make sure the end of the tube is still in the stomach using the methods on page 1.

Step 3

Give the medicine.

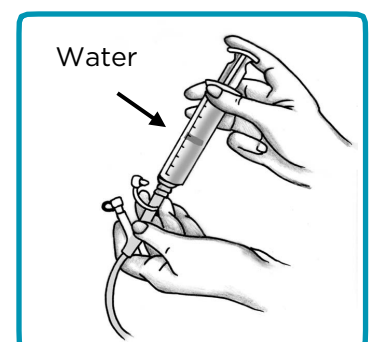
- Draw up all the water and tablet mixture into a syringe.
- Connect syringe filled with prescribed dose of medicine to NG tube and push all the medicine in until plunger stops.



Step 4

Flush the 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.



What do I do if I have issues with my child's 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.

When should I call my child's doctor for help?

- 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