



Possible tube problems, their causes and solutions

During tube feeding, you will inevitably run into a few problems. Often there's nothing to worry about as they can be resolved at home, but sometimes they may require a visit to the hospital. Here are some of the common problems encountered during tube feeding and their solutions.

Tube blockage

This may be due to:

- Badly grinded medication
- Inadequate flushing
- Tube clamp is closed

To remove the blockage, gently flush the tube with sterile/cooled boiled water – try not to use excessive pressure. If it's still blocked try using lukewarm water, or carbonated water if lukewarm water doesn't work. If there's still a blockage, try squeezing the tube gently along the length of the tube. Contact your hospital if none of the above steps work.

The tube falls out

This may be caused by:

- Coughing or sudden movement
- Accidental or excessive pulling of the tube

Only replace NG tubes if you have been instructed and practiced how to replace them. If not, please go to the hospital so the tube can be replaced by healthcare professionals. It's worth contacting the hospital beforehand so you avoid waiting in Accident and Emergency.

PEG/BUTTON/JEJ tubes mustn't be replaced at home. Place a dressing over the site and go to the hospital as soon as possible to avoid the stoma closing over.

Leaking or fluid around the tube

Leaking or fluid around the tube is a serious problem. If this happens, stop the feed immediately and seek urgent medical advice.



Discomfort when feeding

If pain or discomfort is felt during feeding, stop the feed immediately and seek urgent medical advice.

Infection or irritation of skin around the tube

Medical advice should be sought if any infection or irritation appears on the skin around the tube. Avoid using creams and powders on skin that is in contact with the tube as these can damage the tube.