



## Explaining Tube Feeding to Family and Friends

Tube feeding is a process that people may not be familiar with, so it can be quite daunting to them. As a result, you may find yourself having to answer a lot of questions about it, which can be frustrating. This leaflet has been designed to help you answer some of the most common questions asked by friends and family about tube feeding.

You can print out several copies to hand out as well.

### QS: What is tube feeding?

Tube feeding uses liquid nutrition that can be passed through a tube either in the nose, stomach or the small intestine. The liquid feed is similar to normal food as it contains carbohydrates, protein, fats, vitamins, minerals and water. Tube feed can also be digested in the same way as normal food.

Both adults and children can use tube feeding and there are different types of tube to suit different situations. A nasal tube tends to be used when tube feeding is needed for short periods of time, whereas a tube in the stomach or small intestine is used if long-term feeding is needed.

### QS: Why do you need tube feeding?

I need tube feeding because I'm not getting the right nutrition through eating and drinking, or I might not be able to swallow or tolerate food by mouth. The liquid nutrition used in tube feeding provides the right amount of energy, protein and nutrients my body needs which can support and help to improve my recovery.

### QS: How is tube feeding administered?

The liquid nutrition is delivered through the tube. A pump may be used to deliver a set amount of feed at a steady rate. Sometimes I might use bolus feeding; this uses syringes or the pump to deliver small amounts of food into the tube.

### QS: Can you use blended food?

It is not recommended to put anything else other than the prescribed feed through the tube. This can cause blockages and can potentially cause infections due to contamination.



QS: Does tube feeding affect your day-to-day activities?

Daily activities such as bathing and driving aren't affected by my tube. But I must make sure the tube is closed before having a bath or going swimming, and I have to clean the area afterwards. Some activities may dislodge the tube, such as sports, so I need to take extra care and keep an eye on the tube.

QS: Do you feel upset or offended when someone eats in front of you?

Most people who have tube feeding don't feel upset or offended when people eat in front of them. In fact, I'd rather be included in a social activity than have people skip meals because they feel uncomfortable around me.

QS: Can my child play with your child?

Yes! However, some activities, such as running or anything involving pulling or tugging, may dislodge the tube so we just have to keep an eye on the tube. If my child's tube falls out while you're looking after him or her, you don't have to panic. Just give me call.

QS: How do I explain tube feeding to my own child/children?

There are many different ways to explain tube feeding to your children. One example could be to attach a tube set to a doll. I find it often helps if children actually see the tube and where it's placed on my child's body.