

## FACT SHEET 4: DEALING WITH WORRIES AND CONCERNS

### WHAT SIGNS SHOULD I LOOK OUT FOR THAT MIGHT MEAN THERE'S A PROBLEM?

Having a tube placed is an operation where they make a small incision into your stomach and place a short tube. After the operation it is normal to have some pain around the tube, known as the stoma site, for a few days, and for it to feel sore for around a week while it is healing.

Sometimes people who are new to tube feeding can experience a few issues when they first start, if you feel sick, have a painful stomach, or feel very hot and sweaty two hours after the tube was put in, speak to your doctor as soon as possible and follow their advice.

If you notice redness, blood or swelling around the site of your tube, tell your doctor and follow the advice they give you. Your dietitian will create a tube feeding routine for you to try to prevent these symptoms from occurring, but if you are experiencing any side effects contact your dietitian so they can help you alter your routine.

### WHAT SIDE EFFECTS MIGHT I HAVE AT FIRST? WHEN WILL I START TO FEEL BETTER?

At first, you might experience some funny sensations in your stomach, or even some stomach cramps. These should go away after a short time, but if they don't and the symptoms get worse as you have your tube feed, stop the tube feed and contact your doctor straight away.

Side effects will vary in everyone, you might find you don't have any side effects at all. If you do feel anything different, uncomfortable or painful, please ensure you inform your doctor as soon as possible.

### WHAT IF I GET SICK, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

If you feel sick wait for 1-2 hours before you have your tube feed. If you don't feel better, if you still feel sick, are sick, or have diarrhoea, speak to your doctor.

If the medicines you are taking make you feel poorly speak to your doctor to see if there are other medicines you can take instead.

### WHAT IF THE TUBE COMES LOOSE OR FALLS OUT?

**If your feeding tube becomes loose**, see if you can use some tape to tape it down as close to the entry site as possible and then contact your nutrition team immediately.

**If your feeding tube comes out during feeding** then it is important to stop feeding immediately and inform your nutrition team.

**If your feeding tube falls out and the balloon has deflated**, please inform your nutrition team immediately and follow their guidance. You may need to attend hospital as soon as possible (depending on how long you have had the feeding tube in place), or they may advise you to place another device (already provided to you) into the hole to keep it **open** and then you to call your Nutricia Homeward Nurse to see if they can visit you at home to replace your tube. In some cases such a device is not provided and so prompt action is required to ensure another tube can be placed as soon as possible.

**If your feeding tube falls out and the balloon is still inflated**, please attend your local hospital and inform your nutrition team you are on your way and the reason for this.

### **HOW CAN I PREVENT THE TUBE FROM GETTING BLOCKED?**

Flushing your tube before and after any tube feed or medication helps to prevent the tube from getting blocked. If you are doing this but your tube becomes blocked try flushing the tube with 30-50ml of warm or carbonated water — just as your nutrition team or Nutricia Homeward Nurse will have shown you — only use carbonated water and not other fizzy drinks.

If this does not unblock the tube, then try the ‘pull and push’ technique. Using a 60ml syringe, gently draw back on the feeding tube, then pause and push a small amount of water back into the feeding tube; you can repeat this process a few times to see if it can help to dislodge the blockage.

Flushing your feeding tube helps the tube to remain clean and free from anything that might cause a blockage.

### **WHAT IS OVER-GRANULATION AND WHAT DO I DO ABOUT IT?**

Over-granulation is when there is too much skin tissue that comes to the surface of the wound. It happens when the skin around the tube starts to heal; the skin can look pink coloured, bumpy and shiny. If too much of this forms it can prevent the healing process, and lead to a wound that does not heal.

Following the feeding tube after-care advice provided by your healthcare professionals, such as:

- Cleaning the site daily
- Keeping the stoma site dry
- Preventing excessive friction by keeping the fixation plate close to your skin
- Prevent over-granulation tissue from developing by inspecting it daily to look for signs of redness, swelling and pain.

Inform your nutrition team as soon as you notice anything different or the site becomes painful. If it does develop your nutrition nurse can discuss with you how to treat the area and reduce the granulation.

### **WHAT IF THE PUMP BREAKS DOWN?**

Always make sure your pump is charged or plugged in. If you can't make it work call Nutricia Homeward on 0800 093 3672 and they will arrange to get a new one to you.

You can find a troubleshooting guide on the Nutricia Homeward website to help if you have any problems with the pump — it can be found at [nutriciahomeward.co.uk](http://nutriciahomeward.co.uk).

