Nasogastric Feeding Following A Stroke

Information for patients, relatives and carers when considering nasogastric feeding

Adult Speech & Language Therapy and Nutrition & Dietetics
Community & Therapy Services

This leaflet has been designed to give you important information about your condition / procedure, and to answer some common queries that you may have.
Aim of This Leaflet
To help you to understand:

- What a nasogastric tube is
- Why you or your relative may need to have one inserted during their stay in hospital

Nasogastric (NG) Tube:
- This is a fine tube which is inserted via the nose into your stomach
- Insertion of the tube is a simple procedure
- Before inserting the tube the nurse will explain it to you

The steps are:

1. Measuring you
2. Lubricating the tube
3. Asking about any problems with your nose
4. Putting the tube into the nose to the back of your throat—this may be uncomfortable
5. Asking you to swallow.
6. Checking to make sure the tube is in the stomach by attaching a syringe and drawing out some fluid
7. The fluid is tested
8. You can then be given fluids, food and medicines through the tube
9. If no liquid is drawn from the stomach a chest X-ray may be used to see if the tube is positioned correctly

Why do you need an NG tube?

Swallowing:
- Following a stroke your swallowing can become unsafe
- This could mean that when you eat and drink some of the food and fluids go into your airway instead of your stomach
- This can cause chest infections and / or pneumonia and / or choking
- Swallow or partial swallow can return in some people after a number of weeks or months

Swallow screening:
- The ward nurse will carry out a swallow test this involves you swallowing some water
If you fail this test then you will be placed nil by mouth (NBM) and will need a more detailed assessment by the Speech and Language Therapist.

This would mean that medicines, food and fluids cannot be taken. All of these are essential to good recovery after a stroke.

Speech and language therapy swallow assessment:

- You may need a more detailed swallow assessment by the Speech and Language Therapist.
- During this assessment the therapist will do some or all of the following:
  1) Take a detailed case history
  2) Assess the movement of your tongue, lips, cheek and soft palate
  3) Listen to your breathing
  4) Try you with food and drink to swallow

Speech and Language Therapist assessing a patient’s swallow:

- Afterwards you will be given advice about what foods and drinks are safe and whether you need to do exercises or alter your position to make your swallowing safe.
- Some people will have to stay nil by mouth (NBM) because they are not able to eat and drink safely.
- Some people can only take a small amount because their swallowing gets tired.
- Some people do not have the appetite to eat and drink enough.
- If you are placed nil by mouth or not eating and drinking enough a nasogastric (NG) tube would allow you to be given enough food, fluids and medications.
- All of these are essential for a good recovery after stroke.

Dietitian and Nasogastric Feeding:

- If you have a nasogastric tube you will be assessed by a dietitian.
- The dietitian will calculate how much nutrition (food) and fluids you need through your NG tube, based on your weight and other medical factors.
- A feeding regimen will be provided for the nursing staff so that your body meets its full requirements after 3-4 days.
- Your feeding regimen will be monitored regularly by the dietitian.
What goes down the NG tube?
- The NG tubes used are very fine to make them more comfortable. They are usually not noticed after a few hours
- Only liquids can be put through the tube
- It has to be flushed with water to stop it from blocking
- All medicines, food and fluids must be in a liquid form
- The feed comes in bags which attach to your NG tube

NG tube attached to pump and bag of liquid feed

How long will I have the NG tube?
- NG tubes can be used for a period of time. They must be changed every 6 to 8 weeks
- We always check the position before giving anything down the tube
- Sometime they irritate the delicate lining of the nose and throat causing it to become sore
- If your swallowing is good enough or if it improves you can eat and drink with the tube in place
- If you are eating and drinking enough the tube can be removed

What if my swallow does not improve?
- Recovery of swallow after a stroke may not happen or can take a long time
- If this is the case the stroke staff may talk to you about having a different type of
tube placed into the stomach called a PEG (percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy)

- This is likely to be discussed with you 3 to 4 weeks after the NG tube has been placed

Dental Hygiene

- It is very important to keep your mouth healthy when you have an NG tube placed, even though you are not allowed to eat and drink
- Regular mouth care will be offered in the form of moistened sponges to make sure the lining of the mouth remains healthy and free from infection
- Brushing teeth or cleaning dentures is also very important to make sure that there is no opportunity for infection

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Will having the tube passed hurt?
A: The tube is very fine, but when it is passed it can be uncomfortable and feel strange. The uncomfortable sensation should only last a few minutes.

Q: What happens if I don’t have the tube?
A: Your body will not be able to recover without nourishment, fluid or medicines. Often we suggest the NG tube for 7 days to see if there is any improvement in your well-being.

Q: How long do I have to have the tube?
A: This is a difficult question to answer as it is very individual and depends on how your swallow is progressing. Read the section above and ask to discuss the matter further with your doctor, nurse, speech therapist and dietitian.

Contact Details

Stroke Unit
Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital, Scartho Road, Grimsby, DN33 2BA
Telephone Number 01472 874111 ext 7003

Stroke Unit
Scunthorpe General Hospital
Cliff Gardens
Scunthorpe
DN15 7BH
Telephone Number 01724 282282 ext 2103

Adult Speech and Language Therapy –
Grimsby 01472 875405
Scunthorpe acute team 01724 290043
Scunthorpe community team 01724 203751

Nutrition and Dietetics –
Grimsby 01472 875218
Scunthorpe acute team 01724 290043
Scunthorpe community team 01724 203751

Concerns and Queries

If you have any concerns / queries about any of the services offered by the Trust, in the first instance, please speak to the person providing your care.

For Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital
Alternatively you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on (01472) 875403 or at the PALS office which is situated near the main entrance.

For Scunthorpe General Hospital
Alternatively you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on (01724) 290132 or at the PALS office which situated on C Floor.

For more information about our Trust and the services we provide please visit our website: www.nlg.nhs.uk
Information for patients and visitors

Alternatively you can email: nlg-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Confidentiality
Information on NHS patients is collected in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons (e.g. providing care and treatment, managing and planning the NHS, training and educating staff, research etc.).

Everyone working for the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential. Information will only ever be shared with people who have a genuine need for it (e.g. your GP or other professionals from whom you have been receiving care) or if the law requires it, for example, to notify a birth.

Please be assured however that anyone who receives information from us is also under a legal duty to keep it confidential.

Zero Tolerance - Violent, Threatening and Abusive Behaviour
The Trust and its staff are committed to providing high quality care to patients within the department. However, we wish to advise all patients / visitors that the following inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated:

- Swearing
- Threatening / abusive behaviour
- Verbal / physical abuse

The Trust reserves the right to withdraw from treating patients whom are threatening / abusive / violent and ensuring the removal of those persons from the premises.

All acts of criminal violence and aggression will be notified to the Police immediately.

Risk Management Strategy
The Trust welcomes comments and suggestions from patients and visitors that could help to reduce risk.

Perhaps you have experienced something whilst in hospital, whilst attending as an outpatient or as a visitor and you felt at risk.

Please tell a member of staff on the ward or in the department you are attending / visiting.

Moving & Handling
The Trust operates a Minimal Lifting Policy, which in essence means patients are only ever lifted by staff in an emergency situation.

Patients are always encouraged to help themselves as much as possible when mobilising, and if unable to do so, equipment may be used to assist in their safe transfer.

If you have any questions regarding moving and handling of patients within the Trust, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department you are visiting.

Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust
Diana Princess of Wales Hospital
Scartho Road
Grimsby
01472 874111

Scunthorpe General Hospital
Cliff Gardens
Scunthorpe
01724 282282

Goole & District Hospital
Woodland Avenue
Goole
01405 720720

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