

Care of Your G or G-J Tube

Overview

You are going home with a gastro (G-tube) or gastro-jejunal (G-J) tube. Gastro refers to the stomach and the jejunum is a part of the small intestine (also called small bowel). This tube does two things:

1. It provides a way for you to get the food and fluids you need if you cannot take in enough by mouth or if you have a blockage.
2. It allows your stomach to vent air or drainage.

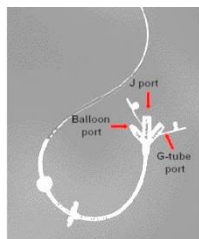


G-Tube

A G-tube is a small, flexible, hollow tube that goes through your skin and into your stomach. The tube is held in place in the stomach by a water-filled balloon.

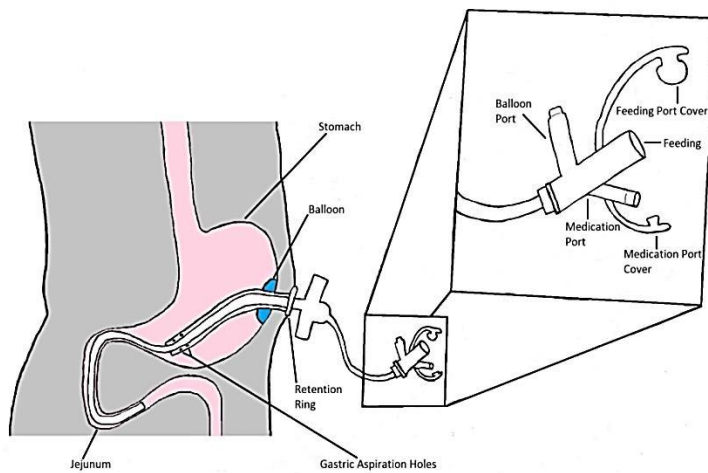
G-J Tube

A G-J tube is a single tube that goes through your skin, into your stomach, and down into the second part of the small intestine (the jejunum).



The tube is made up of different sections.

1. A round plastic disk around the tube, which should fit snugly against the skin so the tube does not slide in and out of the opening. (The tube should move in and out of the opening just a little bit so it doesn't put pressure on the area.)
2. A balloon that sits inside the stomach. When inflated, the balloon helps hold the tube in place.
3. Three access ports at the end of the tube on the outside of your body.
 - One port that goes directly to the stomach (gastric tube port).
 - A second port that goes directly into the jejunum (J tube port).
 - A third port that goes to the balloon (balloon port). **You do not need to do anything with this port.**



Caring for Your Skin

Supplies You Will Need:

- Soap & water
- Cotton tipped swabs
- Gauze or drain sponges
- Syringe
- Water for flushing the tube
- Brodie tip – these tips will fit on any syringe provided to you by a Luer lock system



Brodie tip



Luer lock

Instructions

1. Wash your hands.
2. Remove the old dressing. You may or may not use a dressing around your tube.
3. Carefully check the area around the tube once a day. The area right around the tube may be slightly pink with some crusted drainage. This is normal. Look for swollen or cracked skin. Is there pain or discomfort around the tube?
4. Once a day, clean the skin under the plastic disk and around the tube with mild soap and water. Rinse the skin using clean tap water and pat the area gently until completely dry. You may shower but do not take a bath until your doctor says it is OK (about 4-6 weeks).
5. Do not turn or rotate the G-J tube. This can make the opening larger, which can allow stomach contents to leak onto your skin or cause the tube to twist.

G tube (gastric)

- Leave the gastric port on the tube clamped as long as you can tolerate it.
- If you feel bloated or have nausea, you can release extra air or contents from your stomach, which should make you feel better.

To vent, open the G-tube port and connect it to the gravity bag that was given to you at discharge.



You can open the G-tube port to gravity as often as you need.

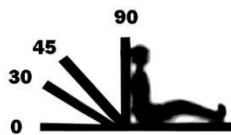
Empty the contents into the toilet as needed.

J-Tube (jejunal)

- Feedings are given through the jejunal port of the tube.
- A continuous feeding is given with a pump over a long period of time, usually 12-24 hours, based upon your doctor and dietician's recommendations.
- Your homecare nurse will teach you how to use your pump at home.
- The J tube is used for feedings and giving medications – but NOT at the same time. **Do not put medication in feedings.**
- Flush the J tube with warm water before and after feedings or medication. This helps prevent the tube from becoming blocked. When you are receiving continuous feedings, flush the tube with warm water every 4 hours or as instructed by your doctor or nurse. They will tell you how much water to use. **This is a very important step because J tubes clog easily.**
- Use liquid medications whenever possible. Talk to your pharmacist for information about solutions and suspensions. If pills must be used, crush them into a fine powder. (To crush pills, use the back of a spoon or a pill crusher. Ask your pharmacist about pill crushers.) Then mix the medicine with a teaspoon of warm water. **Do not crush coated or time-released pills.** Flush with water before and after giving medication through the J tube.
- Change the feeding bag set every day as per the instructions from your homecare nurse or agency.

- Elevate the head of your bed during angle of 30 degrees. Try sleeping
- If you have bloating or nausea, you can 6. If the G-tube port is draining, you feedings and medications.

Zero to 90 degrees



feedings –it should be at a minimum propped up with a pillow or wedge. vent the G-tube as described ion page may still use the J-tube port for

Oral Diet

- Some patients may go home on a liquid diet. Expect whatever you are drinking to be seen in your drainage bag when you open it to gravity.
- Before you are discharged, you will meet with a dietician who can teach you about the diet your doctor recommended.

Problem Solving

- If you have a leak around the tube and it gives you a rash or makes your skin red or sore, call your doctor or clinic.
- If the J tube becomes clogged, try to slowly flush it with 10 milliliters (ml) of warm water.
- If you cannot unclog the tube, call your doctor or nurse. You may need to return to the hospital to have the tube replaced.

What to Do If the Tube Falls Out

- **If your G-tube/G-J tube falls out, do not try to replace it yourself– that must be done by a doctor.** When the G-tube/ G-J tube is replaced, an x-ray must be taken to make sure the tube is in the right place.
- Cover the opening with gauze and tape it in place.
- **Call Roswell Park immediately.** You will need the tube put back in within 1-2 hours. We may ask you to come to Roswell Park to have the tube put back in. Or, you may have to go to a hospital closer to you. Bring the tube with you, if possible, so that the exact size and type of tube can be identified.
- Remember, if the opening on your abdomen was created within the past few months, it could close up, so it is important not to wait if the tube is out for more than a few hours.

When to Call

- You will miss a feeding or medication because you are having a problem with your tube
- You can't unclog the tube
- The tube is leading or the end of the tube splits where the adaptor connects to it
- You start coughing, choking, or vomiting with feedings
- You show other signs of feeding intolerance such as diarrhea, abdominal pain, or constipation
- You have symptoms of infection such as redness, rash, pus, drainage, swelling, or tenderness around the opening, swelling and tenderness, foul odor, or **fever of 100.4°F (38°C)** or higher
- You have questions or concerns

Where should I go if I need urgent care or if I have an emergency?

Our **Assessment and Treatment Center (ATC)** supports our current patients with immediate but non-life-threatening symptoms.

The ATC is open 24/7 but it is not a walk-in clinic. You will need a referral from your Roswell Park physician or the Roswell Park physician-on-call. If you are experiencing urgent (non-life threatening) symptoms, call your Roswell Park Center (example: GI, Breast, Leukemia Center).

If you feel you are in a life-threatening situation, call 911 immediately or go to the nearest hospital emergency room.

- ✓ Bring your Roswell Park "green card" (ID card) with you to the emergency room.
- ✓ Please notify your Roswell Park provider that you are in the emergency room or if you are admitted to the hospital.

Contact Information

- The GI Center is open Monday-Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Phone number is **716-845-4005**. After hours, a triage nurse will answer your call.
- If you are being treated in a Center other than GI, please call your center. If it is after hours, please call Roswell Park at **716-845-2300**.
- You can also call the inpatient unit that discharged you.
- If you would like to speak to a dietitian about nutrition-related tube feed concerns (such as nausea, constipation, or weight concerns related to your tube feeding) please call your dietitian.
 - If you are a patient in our GI Outpatient Center, please call **845-1300 x 2239**.
 - All other patients should call **716-845-2398** to speak with a dietitian.
- For questions or concerns about prescriptions for tube feeding prescriptions or the delivery of tube feeding supplies/formula, you must contact your home healthcare agency for assistance.