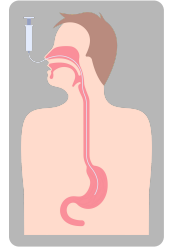


Coping with NG tube and Feeding disorders

Why will my child require a nasogastric tube (NG tube)

NG tube feeding is an alternative way of feeding that can nourish your child when he/she faces difficulties to take in enough calories by mouth. An NG tube is a thin, soft tube that is passed through your child's nostrils, down the back of their throat through the oesophagus (food pipe) into their stomach. Liquid nutrition formulas and medications can then be given through it.



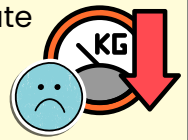
Before or during cancer treatment, your healthcare team may suggest the placement of the NG tube to provide nutritional support.

This may be necessary due to:

- Difficulty in swallowing food /liquid. This makes eating/drinking unsafe.



- Difficulty in obtaining adequate nutrients via the mouth and resulting in weight loss.



How can the NG tube help my child?

NG tube can nourish, heal, empower you and your child on the cancer treatment journey.

Obtaining adequate nutrition during cancer treatment is essential for your child. Adequate nutrition has been related to decreased risk of infection, better overall survival rate and quality of life (Pedretti et al., 2023).



Using a NG tube to deliver nutrition to the gut is safe and aids in maintaining gut functions. It allows you and your child to continue enjoying mealtimes together, while managing the anxiety and stress to meet adequate nutrition and hydration by eating/drinking by mouth. It can also be an effective and timely way to administer medications.

Understandably, the insertion of a NG tube can be a difficult decision to make. Do talk to your healthcare team to fully understand the benefits and potential issues for your child.



How can I support my child to adjust to the NG tube?

The insertion of a NG tube is a short and painless procedure but it can be a traumatic and unpleasant one. Besides pain relief options, **here are some tips to help your child cope with the procedure and adjust to the NG tube:**

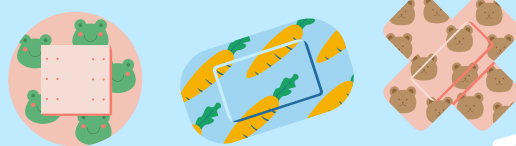
1

Validate your child's emotions about the NG tube. It may take time (at least a few days) for your child to get used to the sensation of having the NG tube in place.



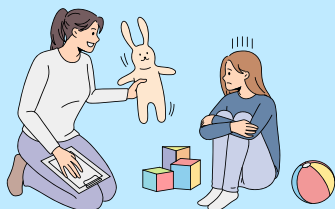
2

Using different designs of NG tube patches and tube pockets to keep the loose end of the tube can help your child feel more comfortable and inject personality.



3

Seek help from the child life therapist to manage pre- and post- procedure anxiety.



4

Distract your child with his/her favorite activities during the insertion process



5

Continue to respect your child's hunger, fullness and any discomfort during feeding. Discuss with your dietitian and/or healthcare team on the best way and time for your child to have their milk feeds and obtain adequate nutrition.



What will mealtimes look like if my child is on the NG tube?

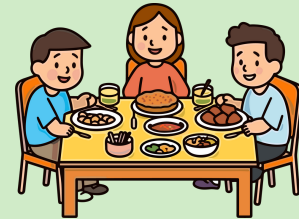
Depending on the reason for the tube insertion, your healthcare team will let you know if your child will be able to eat orally. Most children on NG tubes may still be able to enjoy some food and/or drink orally.



Mealtimes are not just about eating or drinking. It is a time we bond with our family and friends. **While your child is on an NG tube, he/she can still:**

Join in at mealtimes

This is a good opportunity for your child to bond with the family and to explore and taste food if he/she is keen to do so.



Be assigned a role to help for meals

EXAMPLES:

Joining in for supermarket runs.



Setting up the meal table.



Preparing meals.



Learn about foods through other senses

EXAMPLES:

Texture (Touch)

Soft Bread



Crunchy Apple

Smell



Shapes and colours (Visual)



Green Broccoli

Round Mangosteen



Here are some resources that may help your child understand more about NG tube:



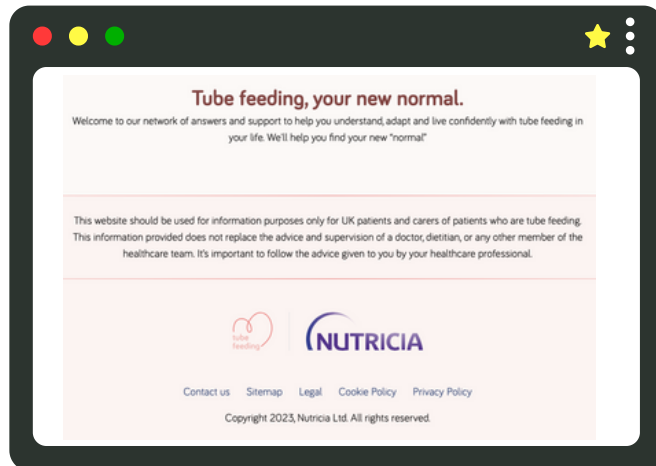
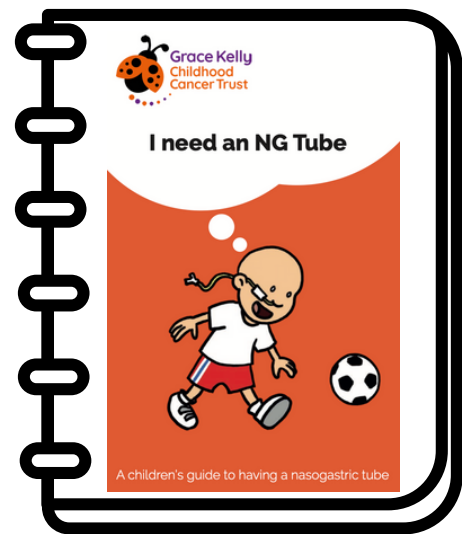
KKH video on NG tube insertion.

This video was developed for children undergoing transplant, and can be helpful for your child to visualize the NG tube.

"I need an NG tube"

from Grace Kelly Childhood Cancer Trust

This resource explains the need for a NG tube and what it means in child-friendly language.



Tube-feeding.com

This is a tube-feeding support website for parents and caregivers, with resources such as stories for children regarding tube-feeding.



References:

Pedretti, L., Massa, S., Leardini, D., Muratore, E., Rahman, S., Pession, A., Esposito, S. & Masetti, R. (2023). Role of nutrition in pediatric patients with cancer. *Nutrients*, 15(3), 710. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu15030710>

