

The home nasogastric tube feeding programme

What is a nasogastric tube?

A nasogastric tube (NGT) is a specially designed tube through which your baby can be fed milk.

When would my baby be considered for nasogastric tube feeding at home?

If your baby is receiving feeds via NGT then it may be possible for you to take them home with the tube in place, so they can establish fully oral feeds at home. This has numerous advantages, such as allowing your baby to be discharged home earlier, reducing exposure to hospital-acquired infections, and gives you the privacy and comfort of establishing full breast or bottle feeds at home.

Your baby would be considered for nasogastric tube feeding at home if:

- you are willing to complete an NGT training package
- you are comfortable to go home NGT feeding
- your baby is medically well
- your baby's weight is stable
- they can maintain their temperature in an open cot
- they are feeding at least three hourly
- they can complete two sucking feeds with good coordination in 24 hours.

What if my baby pulls out his/her tube at home?

Your baby's NGT will be re-inserted by a healthcare professional. This may be carried out by the neonatal home team while at home, or if out-of-hours, can be replaced on the neonatal unit. All babies on the home tube feeding programme will be able to take some milk orally so it should be unnecessary to bring your baby into hospital in the middle of the night.

How will I learn how to feed my baby at home using an NGT?

You will receive training from the nursing staff in the hospital until you are comfortable using the NGT. It is a good idea to keep a copy of your NGT competency booklet to remind you of the correct way to use your baby's NGT. It is important that you ask questions if you are unsure of any part of using the NGT, as there is a lot of information to take in and it can feel daunting.

You should only use breast milk or infant formula, and never put medications down the tube unless you have been specifically told to.

What happens when my baby is discharged home on NGT feeding?

You will be fully supported at home by the neonatal home team. They will visit you at home, and you will be able to contact them via telephone. All the telephone numbers are included at the end of this leaflet.

As your baby's feeding improves orally (by mouth) then the amount of feed through the NGT will reduce and there will be a guide to help you with this. Your baby's weight will be monitored to make sure he or she is growing enough.

Your baby will be able to bathe as normal. You may need to change the tape that secures the tube, if it becomes damp. Your baby will also be able to go out of the house as normal, so the NGT should not interrupt the normal routine for your baby or family.

What are the risks of having an NGT?

When the guidance is followed NGT feeding is safe; however, every medical procedure has some risk. When NGT is inserted there is small risk of NGT going down the wrong way into lungs instead of stomach. The tube could also move if it is accidentally pulled or if the baby vomits or retches.

Wrong position of NGT becomes obvious when the position of the tube is checked. For these reasons it is essential to check the position of the tube after it is passed and ALWAYS before the tube is used to give feed. The tube can be removed without causing damage if it's not in correct position.

Is there anything else I need to know?

If you have any questions or concerns about the home NGT feeding programme then please contact the neonatal home team on 07766 994816 (Monday to Friday 7.30am to 6pm; Saturday 10am to 6pm). Outside of these hours, please contact the neonatal unit on 023 8120 6001.

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audio tape, please telephone **023 8120 4688** for help.

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