

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Tube feeding a baby on the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)

This leaflet explains the procedure for feeding your baby through a tube.

Why?

Babies who are ill or born early may not be able to suck initially so they are fed by a small tube passed through their nose and into their stomach. This is a nasogastric tube (NGT).

What is tube feeding?

As part of the care of your baby you may see the nursing staff give milk to your baby through a tube into their stomach.

At first you may like to hold the syringe while the milk is given as this involves you with feeding your baby.

You may feel at a later stage you would like to be more involved. The nurses can help you to learn how to test the tube prior to feeding and give the feed so you can have quality time caring for your baby.

Involvement with tube feeding is your choice and we will support you if you wish to know more.

Support will also be given if you choose not to be involved with feeding in this way.

What equipment is needed?

- 3ml oral syringe to test the aspirate.
- pH indicator strips to test the acidity of the aspirate to establish the position of the feeding tube.
- 20ml syringe to give the feed. If your baby is on small amounts of milk a smaller syringe may be used.

How to test the tube

At feed time you must test the tube before giving any milk. With the 2ml syringe, attach it to the feeding tube and draw back the syringe gently. A small amount of fluid should come into the syringe for testing. If there is none, or there is resistance and it is difficult to pull back on the syringe, please ask for help.

Place a small amount of aspirate onto the indicator strips so all the three squares are covered. Compare the colour of the strip to the colour code on the box. We are looking for a reading of 5 or below. If it is above 5 please ask for advice from a member of the nursing staff.

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you need this information in a different language or format, please contact the PET (as above).

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.

External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them.

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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