Well-Informed

Promoting the health and welfare of people with developmental disabilities

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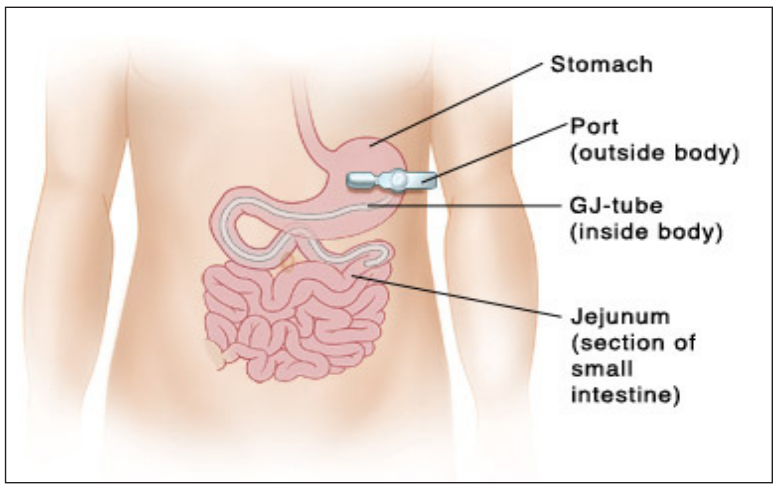
wherever they choose to live, work, and spend their day

Feeding Tubes



The Basics

Feeding tubes carry nutrition directly into the stomach (gastrostomy) or into the intestine (jejunostomy). Placement of a G or J tube can be temporary or permanent based on a person's needs. Unlicensed personnel always need nurse or family delegation of G/J tube administration of fluid, food, or medication.

Types of Feeding Tubes

Surgical gastrostomy; feeding buttons; replacement balloon gastrostomy; percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG)

- The outside part, or port, that the caregiver uses comes through the skin of the abdomen; the insertion site of the tube is called the stoma
- Tubes may provide all of a person's nutritional intake or may provide nutritional supplements to people unable to eat enough
- Tubes are made from materials that won't be damaged by digestive acids
- Well-placed and healed tubes should flow easily and won't leak; seek medical attention for leaks

Potential Complications

Improperly positioned feeding tubes can cause serious injury, including fatalities, such as infection, respiratory distress, shortness of breath, and aspiration pneumonia

Tube Placement

Caring for feeding tube insertion sites

- Stabilize tube at skin surface during feeding
- Examine skin around stoma for redness, swelling, and cleanliness before and after feeding
- Clean skin around stoma daily with soap and warm water, rinsing and patting dry
- Gently clean feeding port and flush thoroughly with water to remove residual feeding formula
- Change any soiled bandages once per day

Medication Administration

Common improper medication administration techniques include mixing multiple drugs together to give to a person all at once or failing to flush the tube before or between giving medications

Best Practices to Decrease Risks

- Don't mix medications with feeding formulas; that could cause drug-formula interactions leading to blocking in tubes
- Flush the feeding tube with at least 15 mL of water before and after drug administration
- Stop tube feeding before drug administration
- Each medication should be administered separately through the feeding tube
- Consult physician or pharmacist