



# danutips for Enteral Care



## Avoiding & Troubleshooting Tube Clogs

Dealing with clogs in gastrostomy tubes at home can be challenging, but understanding the causes and knowing effective solutions can make a big difference. Here are some insights and practical tips to help maintain clear and functional feeding tubes.

### Why Do Gastrostomy Tubes Clog

- ✦ **Medication Residue:** Some medications, especially if they are crushed and mixed together or undissolved when administered, can result in a tube obstruction.
- ✦ **Improper Flushing:** Insufficient flushing can leave residual food, formula, or medication in the tube.
- ✦ **Thicker Formulas infused via pump:** High-viscosity formulas are more likely to clog a feeding tube when infused slowly.

### Preventing Tube Clogs

- ✓ **Remember Your “Water Sandwich”:**  
Flush the tube with at least 20 ml of warm water before and after feedings and medication administrations.
- ✓ **Take Extra Care with Pump Feeding:**  
Pump fed patients should receive a manual/syringe flush at regular intervals throughout the day, especially with smaller bore tube sizes and nutrient dense formulas containing fiber.
- ✓ **Use Appropriate Form of Medication Through the Tube:**  
Consult with a pharmacist to evaluate if crushable tablets or liquid medications are an option.

### Troubleshooting a Clogged Tube

- ✗ **Warm Water Flush:**  
Use a syringe to gently push warm water through the tube. Take your time and allow the warm water to soak the clog. Then, apply a gentle but firm back-and-forth motion with the plunger of the syringe to help dislodge the clog.
- ✗ **Manual Manipulation:**  
Carefully massage the tube between your fingers to dislodge or break up the blockage.
- ✗ **Enzymatic Declogging Agents:**  
Consider using an enzyme solution to break down a stubborn clog.

**Disclaimer:** This information is not a substitute for professional medical care. In case of problems, complications, or questions, always contact your medical professional.

#### References:

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