



danutips for Enteral Care



Maximizing the Lifespan of a Balloon Gastrostomy Tube

The lifespan of a balloon-style gastrostomy tube depends on several critical factors, including material degradation, mechanical stress, and proper maintenance. Here are the key factors affecting its lifespan and best practices to extend it:



Gastric Environment & Balloon Integrity

High gastric pH as well as bacterial or fungal colonization of the tube can weaken the balloon material, potentially leading to leaks or ruptures. Patients with high gastric output may experience faster balloon degradation and need more frequent replacements.



Activity Level & Mechanical Stress

Very active patients may encounter more accidental dislodgements or mechanical wear. Excessive pulling or tension on the tube may weaken the balloon and can lead to premature failure.

- ✓ Proper securement of the tube helps reduce mechanical stress.
- ✓ For low-profile devices (Buttons), stoma measurement and proper sizing of the tube will help ensure a correct and secure fit, thereby avoiding leakage or stoma-site complications.





Balloon Inflation and Maintenance

Over time, water can slowly evaporate or leak from the retention balloon, causing deflation and dislodgement. Maintaining appropriate balloon inflation is crucial for tube stability, placement, and a proper fit.

- ✓ Weekly assessment of the balloon's water volume is essential.
- ✓ Use the recommended amount of sterile water for inflation. Avoid overinflation and underinflation.
- ✓ Sterile water is best for inflation, NEVER use saline, air, or acidic fluids. Also avoid using boiled tap water.



Tube Care & Handling

Proper care and handling of the tube are vital to maintaining its lifespan.

- ✓ Regular flushing with water prevents clogging and extends tube lifespan.
- ✓ Use of extension sets with Buttons for administration of feedings, water, and medication is essential to ensuring the lifespan of the tube.
- ✓ Never connect the enteral syringe directly to the Button feeding port as it will damage the anti-reflux valve of the Button.
- ✓ Always follow the manufacturer's guidelines for tube handling and maintenance.
- ✓ Regular cleaning and hygiene help prevent infections and complications at the stoma site.



Follow Guidelines & Instructions

Always adhere to the instructions, recommendations and guidelines provided by your healthcare provider and the manufacturer of your gastrostomy tube. While manufacturers usually suggest tube replacement every three months, the lifespan of a balloon gastrostomy tube may be extended with proper care, including regular monitoring, flushing, and gentle handling.



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

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