



danuTips for Enteral Care



Blenderized Tube Feeding (BTF) and Gastrostomy Tubes:

Benefits, Best Practices & Preventing Potential Challenges

The use of home blenderized tube feedings (real food purees) is gaining popularity as a natural alternative or supplement to commercial formulas. While this approach can offer benefits to enterally-fed consumers, it may also present challenges that require careful management.

Let's explore the benefits of BTF and how to handle potential challenges:



Tolerance and Digestion

The use of blenderized food in tube feeding may help reduce gastrointestinal symptoms from a traditional tube feeding formula.

- ✓ May reduce constipation and/or diarrhea.
- ✓ May reduce reflux, retching, and vomiting.
- ✓ Can help diversify the gut microbiota.
- ✓ Introduce blended foods to a traditional tube feeding regimen in a gradual way to improve tolerance and help the gut adapt to the natural food sources of fiber.
- ✓ Adjust fiber content based on individual tolerance.
- ✓ Work closely with your healthcare provider to ensure suitability for each patient.



Nutritional Adequacy

Home blenderized food may not provide the same calorie-dense diet as commercial formulas.

- ✓ Ensure that meals provide adequate calories, protein, fats and micronutrients – consult a registered dietitian for recipe analysis and guidance.
- ✓ Monitor hydration and review fluid intake with a registered dietitian to make sure the appropriate amount of fluid is provided.
- ✓ Pump infusion of blenderized food requires precise monitoring to ensure accurate delivery of the measured infusion.





Clogging & Tube Blockages

Blenderized food may clog your gastrostomy tube and result in premature tube replacement.

- ✓ Flush the gastrostomy tube with water before and after each feeding to keep the tube clean on the inside.
- ✓ Use a high-powered blender to achieve a smooth consistency.
- ✓ Longer blending times can help reduce the particle size of the blend.
- ✓ Strain the blend if needed, especially for smaller tube sizes.
- ✓ Do not mix medication into blenderized food.



Administration, Storage & Safety

Preparing home blenderized food requires careful handling. Use safe food handling practices to prevent bacterial contamination.

- ✓ Prepare food in small batches and refrigerate unused portions promptly.
- ✓ Consume refrigerated portions within 24 hours.
- ✓ Freezing homemade blends keeps food safe almost indefinitely. Check recommended storage times for frozen foods, if necessary.
- ✓ Label and date stored portions to avoid spoilage.
- ✓ Bolus or syringe feeding is recommended over pump infusion of home blenderized formulas (hang time for pump infusion is 2 hours or less).
- ✓ If continuous infusion is required for feeding, consider a commercially prepared blenderized tube feeding formula with a longer hang time.

Proper preparation, monitoring, and support are crucial for a successful delivery of home blenderized food. Tolerance varies by individual. Always contact a dietitian or healthcare provider for personalized guidance and adhere to recommended guidelines.



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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