

What to Expect When Your Gastrostomy (G) Tube is Removed at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre

Information for patients and families

Read this pamphlet to learn more about:

- What to expect
- How to care for the site
- Problems to watch for



Your doctor has sent you to the Wharton Head and Neck Clinic to have your gastrostomy feeding tube removed. The more common term is “**G-tube**”. Your gastrostomy or G-tube tube will be removed by one of our trained clinic nurses.

What do I need to know?

- No pain medicine or sedation (medicine to relax you) is needed to remove your tube.
- You do not need to stay in the hospital overnight.
- Most gastrostomy tubes are removed without any problems. However, all medical procedures carry some risks.
 - In the rare case that a person has bleeding, abdominal (stomach) pain, a tube that could not be removed, or other unexpected complication, they could be treated in the Interventional Radiology Department.

How do I prepare?







- **Do NOT eat or drink anything for 6 hours before your procedure.**
- **Do NOT put anything down your tube 6 hours before your procedure.**
- Bring your Ontario health card (OHIP). If you do not have an OHIP card, please bring another form of government-issued photo ID (such as a driver’s license, passport, or other provincial health card).

What can I expect?

1. The nurse explains the procedure and any possible risks to you and answers any questions you have.
2. The nurse deflates the internal balloon.
3. The nurse pulls the tube out through the skin. You may feel pulling at the exit site area.
4. The nurse holds gentle pressure over the site for a few moments and then places a dressing over the skin.

What important instructions should I follow after the tube is removed?

When the tube is removed there will be a small hole on your skin and in your stomach that needs time to heal. Follow these instructions to help the hole heal properly.

-  Do NOT eat anything for 4 hours after the tube is removed. You need this time for the hole in your stomach to close. If you eat, the wall of your stomach may stretch and keep the hole open. After 4 hours you can eat again.
-  Take sips of water for the first 4 hours after the tube is removed if you feel thirsty and to keep your mouth moist. After 4 hours you can drink regular amounts of fluids.
-  Don't drink carbonated beverages (like soda or beer) for 24 hours. The gas causes your stomach to expand and could re-open the hole in your stomach.
-  Keep the dressing on for 2 days, then change it to a Band-aid and clean the area with gentle soap and water. Dry well using a gauze. The original dressing is waterproof and you can shower with it.
-  Do not take a bath or swim for 3 days. If the dressing falls off before 2 days, you can use regular gauze and tape to cover the hole. Cover the dressing with plastic if you take a shower. After 3 days, your dressing can come off.
-  Do NOT exercise, do strenuous activities, or lift anything heavier than 5 pounds (2.5 kilograms) for 3 days.

What problems should I watch for?

When you change the dressing, look at the area where the tube was removed. Check for:

- redness
- swelling
- leaking fluid or pus
- tenderness

If you have any of these symptoms, see the contact information below.

During clinic hours (9:00 am – 4:00 pm) Monday to Friday:

- Call the Head and Neck Nurse Triage Line at 416 946 2206 Press 2
- Please remember to leave your MRN or OHIP number on your voicemail

After clinic hours (after 4:00 pm), on weekends and holidays:

- Call the CAREpath™ Line at 1 877 681 3057



If you feel sharp pain in your belly within 24 hours of the tube coming out, go to the nearest Emergency Department or call 911.

Tell the nurses and doctors that you had your G-tube removed and now you are having pain.



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