

# Know What to Expect When Having a Feeding Tube Inserted as an Outpatient

**For patients who will have a feeding tube inserted (put in) at the hospital and will go home the same day**

Read this resource to learn:

- What a feeding tube is
- Why you need a feeding tube
- How to prepare for getting your feeding tube
- What to expect the day your feeding tube is inserted
- What to expect when you go home with your feeding tube
- Where to get more information

**Your feeding tube may also be called a gastrostomy tube or G-tube.**



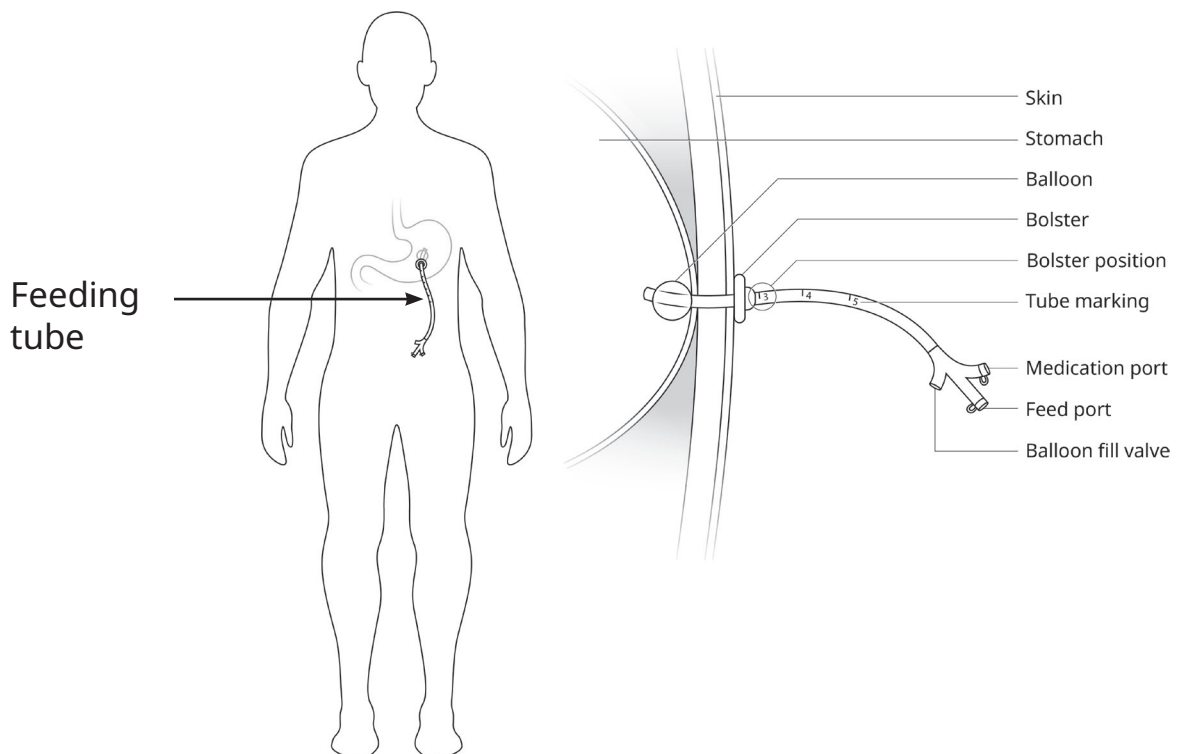


## Information for staying safe when you have your feeding tube inserted

- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight on the night before your appointment.
- Do not take your medicines on the morning that your feeding tube is being inserted. Only take your medicines if your doctor or nurse tells you to do so.
- Have somebody pick you up or go home with you after your appointment. You will not be able to drive since the medicines you get during the day will make you sleepy.
- If you are staying at the Princess Margaret Lodge you do not need a family member or friend to bring you home. You can take the University Health Network shuttle bus back to the Princess Margaret Lodge.

### What is a feeding tube?

A feeding tube is a rubber or plastic tube that is put into your stomach. One end of the feeding tube is in your stomach. The other end comes out of your stomach on the outside of your body. You will use this tube to feed yourself so that you get the right amount of water and nutrition (food).



## Why do you need a feeding tube?

If you are getting chemotherapy or radiation therapy or both to the head and neck area, you may have some side effects of treatment. Some of these side effects may make it hard for you to get the water and nutrition (food) you need.

A feeding tube will help you get water and nutrition if you have side effects such as:

- Mouth pain
- Trouble swallowing

You will get nutritional supplements through your feeding tube to keep you strong during your treatment. Nutritional supplements are drinks that provide nutrition (food) when you are not able to eat well. Your feeding tube may also be used to give you medicines.

## How to prepare for getting your feeding tube

### The night before your feeding tube is inserted

Do not eat or drink **anything** after midnight the night before your feeding tube is inserted.

- If your mouth is dry, you can rinse with water and spit it out.
- Take your usual medicines the night before unless your doctor or nurse has told you not to take them.
- If you are on blood thinners, your doctor or nurse will tell you when to stop taking them. You may need to stop taking your blood thinners a few days before your procedure. Your doctor or nurse will tell you when it is safe to start taking them again.

Your feeding tube will be put in at the Toronto General Hospital, Medical Imaging Department on the 1st Floor of the Munk Building:

Date:

Time:

## **What to expect the day you get your feeding tube inserted**

You will get your feeding tube inserted as an outpatient. This means you will not stay in hospital after you get your feeding tube inserted. You will go home later the same day that you have your feeding tube inserted. But before you go home you will have your radiation treatment.



### **Important note about medicines**

- Do not take any medicines in the morning before your feeding tube is put in unless your doctor gives you different instructions.
- Your doctor will review your medicines and tell you what medicines can be taken the day of the procedure and when they can be taken.
- Your doctor will prescribe pain medicine to take if needed once your feeding tube is inserted and you are discharged home.

## **What to bring to the hospital:**

- ✓ All of your medicines.
- ✓ Your health card (OHIP card). If you do not have an OHIP card, bring another form of government photo ID (such as a driver's license, passport, or other provincial health card).
- ✓ Any items you may need to be comfortable like an iPod or mobile device.

## **How to get to the Medical Imaging Department at Toronto General Hospital:**

You will have your feeding tube inserted at the Medical Imaging Department at Toronto General Hospital. Here are the directions to the Medical Imaging Department:

The Medical Imaging Department is on the 1st floor of Toronto General Hospital. The Robert E. McEwan entrance for Toronto General Hospital is the closest entrance to the Medical Imaging Department. This entrance is directly across the street from Princess Margaret Cancer Centre on University Avenue.

There is an information desk close to this entrance. Ask the information desk for directions when you enter the hospital. The Medical Imaging Department is on the first floor of the West Wing next to Tim Horton's.

Once you arrive, tell the Medical Imaging receptionist that you are having a feeding tube inserted as an outpatient. The receptionist will help you get to Interventional Radiology. This is the area where you will have the feeding tube inserted.

## **Before the procedure**

The doctor inserting the feeding tube will explain the procedure (how the tube will be put in) to you. The doctor will also tell you about the risks and benefits of having the procedure. You will be asked to sign a consent form before you have your feeding tube inserted. This form states that you agree to have the procedure.

Once you give your consent, you will get an intravenous (IV) needle in your lower arm.

Through the IV you will get:

- A sedative (medicine to help you relax)
- Pain medicine (so that you are not in pain)
- Fluids to keep you hydrated (have enough water)

You may need to have a small area of your stomach shaved.

## **During the procedure**

1. You will get a local anesthesia (a medicine that causes numbing) on a small part of your stomach area. The anesthesia will help to reduce any discomfort or pain you may feel during the procedure. You will be awake during the procedure but very sleepy from the sedative.
2. A tube will be passed through your nose into your stomach. This tube will fill your stomach with air. This helps the doctor doing the procedure to find the right place to put the feeding tube.
3. Using X-ray as a guide, the feeding tube is inserted through the skin into the stomach.

The entire procedure takes about 30 to 45 minutes.

## **What else do I need know?**

- You may need to have a small area of your stomach shaved.
- You will be awake during the procedure but very sleepy from the sedative.
- It is normal to feel some pressure during the procedure.

## **After the procedure**

After your feeding tube is put in, you will go to the recovery area. In the recovery area, the nurses will check your blood pressure and heart rate (vital signs). They will look after your stomach area and new feeding tube to make sure you are recovering safely.

After the procedure, you will get:

- Pain and nausea relief medicine through your IV. This will help control any pain and nausea (feeling of having to throw-up) you have. It is normal to feel some pain in your belly area after the feeding tube is inserted.
- Fluids through your IV so that you stay hydrated (have enough water) while you recover.

After the procedure you may feel uncomfortable. This is because of the air that was put into your stomach when the feeding tube was put in. This feeling should go away in a few hours.

Tell your nurse if you have any pain. You will leave the recovery area when:

- you can drink sips of clear fluids
- you have little pain or nausea

Usually you will leave the recovery area 4 to 6 hours after you have had your feeding tube put in. If you still feel unwell after 6 hours, your doctor at Princess Margaret will be contacted. Your doctor will decide if you can leave the recovery area or if you need more time to recover.

If you need more time to recover, they will arrange for you to be transferred to Princess Margaret. You will stay here until you feel well enough to go home.

### **After you leave the recovery area**

If you are well enough to leave the recovery area, the nurse will arrange for a porter to bring you to Princess Margaret. You will get your radiation treatment. After your radiation treatment, you can go home.

If you have pain after discharge, you can take your prescribed pain medication with water.

You must have a family member or friend take you home. This is because you will be sleepy from the medicines you got during the day. You will not be able to drive.

If you are feeling unwell after your radiation treatment, go to the Radiation Nursing Clinic to be seen by a nurse before going home.

If you are staying at the Princess Margaret Lodge you do not need a family member or friend to bring you home. You can take the University Health Network shuttle bus back to the Princess Margaret Lodge. You can let the radiation therapist know and they will arrange for a porter to take you to the shuttle bus stop.



## What to expect when you go home with your feeding tube

When you go home you will need to be on a clear fluid diet. A clear fluid diet includes liquids that leave little or no remains in the stomach. Clear fluids consist of foods that are liquid or become liquid at room temperature (for example, Popsicles).

You will continue to be on a clear fluid diet for 24 hours after your g-tube is inserted. You can return to eating your usual foods after you meet with the oncology nurse.

Below is a list of food you can have and foods you should avoid.

<b>Type of Food</b>	<b>✓ Foods you can have</b>	<b>✗ Foods you should avoid</b>
<b>Fruits</b>	Clear fruit juice with no pulp including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• apple</li><li>• grape</li><li>• pear</li><li>• cranberry</li></ul>	All others including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• nectars</li><li>• fruit juice with pulp</li><li>• prune juice</li><li>• tomato juice</li><li>• vegetable juice</li></ul>
<b>Soups</b>	Bouillon Consommé	All other soups (cream soups, noodle soups)
<b>Desserts</b>	Clear gelatin desserts (like Jell-O) Popsicles, freezies	All others including chocolate Popsicles and ice-cream bars

<b>Type of Food</b>	<b>✓ Foods you can have</b>	<b>✗ Foods you should avoid</b>
<b>Drinks</b>	Lactose free and non-milky nutritional supplements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boost Fruit Beverage or Boost Soothe (This is the only type of Boost drink you can have)</li> <li>• Coffee (black or sweeteners only, no milk or cream)</li> <li>• Tea (black or sweeteners only, no milk or cream)</li> <li>• Crystal fruit drinks (no pulp or remains)</li> <li>• Sport drinks (for example, Gatorade)</li> <li>• Carbonated (fizzy) drinks (avoid if you have mouth pain)</li> </ul>	All others drinks including nutrition supplements such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure</li> <li>• Boost (non-fruit beverages)</li> <li>• milk</li> <li>• cream</li> </ul>
<b>Sweeteners</b>	Honey, maple syrup, sugar, and sugar substitutes that melt into drinks and leave no remains	
<b>Milk and Milk Products</b>		All milk and milk products (including milk substitutes such as almond or rice milk)

## **What to expect the day after your feeding tube is inserted**

The day after your feeding tube is inserted you will need to return to the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre. You will meet with an oncology nurse (cancer nurse) and a dietitian. You will also have your radiation treatment after you have met with the oncology nurse and dietitian.

You should have been given your appointment times before your feeding tube was inserted. If you do not have your appointment times, you need to go to the Radiation Nursing Clinic at 9:00 am to meet with the oncology nurse. The dietitian will meet you in the Radiation Nursing Clinic after that. You will then go to your treatment unit to have your radiation treatment.

### **Meeting with the oncology nurse**

You will meet with the oncology nurse for about 1 hour.

The oncology nurse will check:

- your vital signs (blood pressure, pulse, temperature)
- that your feeding tube is in the right place
- that you have no bleeding where the feeding tube comes out of your stomach

At this meeting, the nurse will also:

- let you know if you can start eating solid food
- teach you how to take care of your feeding tube
- teach you how to feed yourself through your feeding tube

You may also see the nurse practitioner or doctor if you are feeling unwell or the oncology nurse has concerns about your feeding tube.

## Meeting with the dietitian

After you meet with the oncology nurse, you will meet with the dietitian for about 1 hour. The dietitian is an expert on nutrition and making sure you receive enough formula and water through your feeding tube.

The dietitian will:

Check that you are getting enough nutrition (food).

- Help you learn about the different types of nutritional supplements.
- Help you learn which nutritional supplements are best to meet all of your body's nutritional needs.
- Teach you how to feed yourself the nutritional supplements through your feeding tube.
- Give you advice on which foods you may be able to eat through your mouth.
- Provide information about when and how much water and nutritional supplements you should take.

You may meet the dietitian every week while you have your feeding tube. They will help you adjust your diet to meet your nutritional needs.

## Where to get more information

Below are important phone numbers for your health care team at Princess Margaret. Call these numbers if you have questions about your feeding tube, before or after it has been inserted.

### **During Clinic hours (9:00 am - 5:00 pm) Monday to Friday, call:**

#### **Head and Neck Nurse Triage Line**

Phone: 416 946 2206 Press 2

#### **Radiation Nursing Clinic, Level 2B**

Phone: 416 946 4501, extension 6558

#### **Dietitian**

Phone: 416 946 4501, extension 5266 or 416 946 4501, extension 7335

When you call, please provide:

- your first and last name and your date of birth
- OR
- your health card (OHIP)

### **To talk to a cancer nurse after 4:00 pm, weekends or holidays:**

- Call CAREpath at 1 877 681 3057, or
- Visit CareChart online at [carechartathome.ca](https://carechartathome.ca). If the nurse does not answer right away, they will call you back within 20 minutes.



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