

## Interventional Radiology: Gastrostomy Tube After Hospital Care

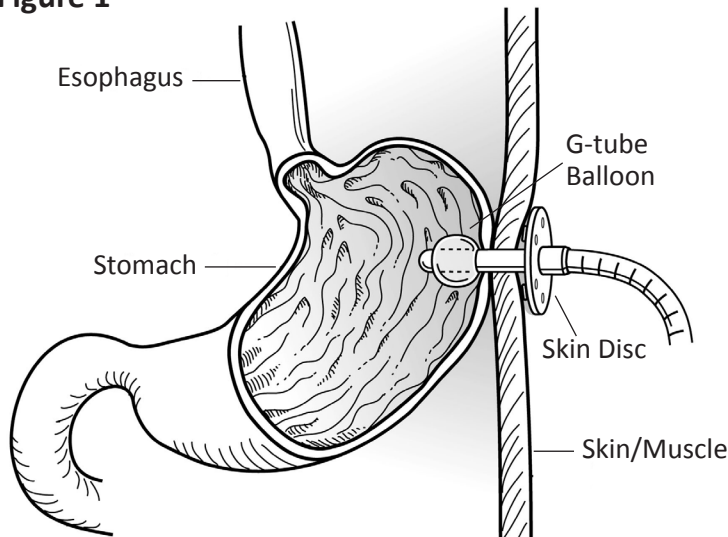
A gastrostomy tube (G-tube) is a small flexible tube that is inserted through the skin into your stomach. It can be used to provide needed nutrition or medicine.

The tube is held in place by:

- Inflating the balloon end of the G-tube inside the stomach.
- A small plastic “skin” disc that fits against the skin (see Figure 1).

*If you have any questions, please call the IR Department at 312.926.5200.*

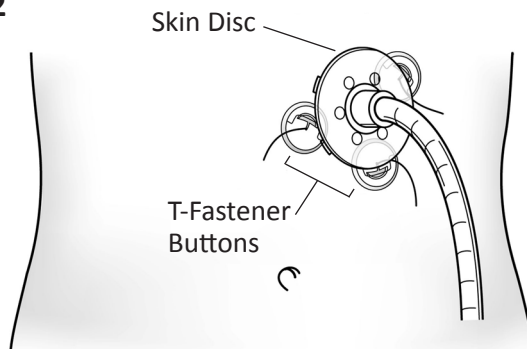
**Figure 1**



The following provides helpful information in caring for your G-tube at home.

After the G-tube is placed, you will have 2 to 3 T-fastener buttons on your abdomen. These help secure the G-tube while the incision heals and are held in place by sutures (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2**



## Activity

You may shower 24 hours after the G-tube is placed, but do not take a tub bath until the site is healed, about 6 weeks.

You may resume your normal activities as tolerated. You may feel mild discomfort at the tube site, for about 1 week.

## Care Guidelines

- **Do not clamp the tube.** This can cause the balloon to break and the tube may come out.
- Always wash your hands with liquid soap for 1 to 2 minutes before caring for your tube or giving a feeding.
- Keep the skin under the disk clean and dry. You may put a split gauze dressing under the skin disk to collect drainage. A small amount of drainage is normal. Change the dressing daily.
- If you notice mild redness under the skin disk, you may apply a small amount of barrier cream with zinc oxide (such as Desitin®) as needed.
- Check the skin around the tube site daily for redness, bleeding, drainage or problems with the tube hole becoming larger. You can use a mirror to see all sides of the tube site.
- You may tape the tube to your skin for your comfort.

Before you go home, your nurse will teach you how to:

- Care for your tube.
- Flush the tube before and after giving feedings or medicines.
- Give yourself feedings using the tube.

A dietician will meet with you to discuss what type of formula or supplement you will use at home.

## Follow-up

The T-fastener buttons may fall off on their own. If they do not fall off after 2 weeks, you will need to return to the Interventional Radiology (IR) Department to have them removed. This should only take about 10 minutes. Call the IR Department at 312.926.5200 to make an appointment.

The IR Department is on the 4th floor of the Feinberg Pavilion. Parking is available at 222 East Huron Street, across from the Feinberg and Galter pavilions. For discounted rates, please bring your parking ticket with you. Tickets can be validated at the Customer Service Desks on the 1st or 2nd floors of the Feinberg and Galter pavilions.

If you have any questions about your G-tube, please call the IR Department at 312.926.5200.

## When to Call the Doctor

Call the IR Department if you have any of the following:

- Reddened skin around the tube site that is swollen, warm to the touch, or painful.
- Fever of 101° F or above.
- Skin redness or irritation that lasts longer than 2 to 3 days.
- Large amounts of drainage with swelling and skin break down around the tube site.
- Cannot flush the tube or run the feedings.
- The tube site opening increases in size or is leaking stomach contents.
- The tube is moving farther out from the skin or the tube falls out.

***Note: If the tube falls out and you cannot reach the IR department, go to the nearest emergency room.***

After hours or weekends call 312.926.5200 and ask for the IR doctor on call to be paged.

## Northwestern Medicine – Health Information Resources

For more information, contact Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Alberto Culver Health Learning Center (HLC) at [hlc@nm.org](mailto:hlc@nm.org), or by calling 312.926.5465. You may also visit the HLC on the 3rd floor, Galter Pavilion at 251 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL. Health information professionals can help you find the information you need and provide you with personal support at no charge.

For more information about Northwestern Medicine, please visit our website at [nm.org](http://nm.org).

*Para asistencia en español, por favor llamar al Departamento de Representantes para Pacientes al 312.926.3112.*

The entities that come together as Northwestern Medicine are committed to representing the communities we serve, fostering a culture of inclusion, delivering culturally competent care, providing access to treatment and programs in a nondiscriminatory manner and eliminating healthcare disparities. For questions, please call either Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Patient Representatives Department at 312.926.3112, TDD/TTY 312.926.6363 or the Northwestern Medical Group Patient Representatives Department at 312.695.1100, TDD/TTY 312.926.6363.

Developed by: NMH Interventional Radiology