

HOW TO BOLUS FEED

WHAT IS BOLUS FEEDING?

Bolus feeding is a way of receiving a set amount of feed as required, without use of a feeding pump. This is given over a period of time, as advised by your healthcare professional, using an enteral feeding syringe.

WHY DO YOU NEED TO BE BOLUS FED?

Your healthcare professional has chosen gravity/bolus feeding as a way to manage your feeding needs. The feeds are a special mixture of several different nutrients that are required to help you meet your nutritional requirements.

NOTE: There are different ways of bolus feeding. Your healthcare professional will advise on the best method for you.

Gravity feeding (with or without a gravity feeding set), where gravity naturally draws the feed through into feeding tube,

OR

'Push' syringe feeding, where the feed may need help to be pushed through your feeding tube using the syringe with its plunger.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

You should only bolus feed if you have been advised to do so by your healthcare professional as this method of feeding is not suitable for everyone.

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

- 60ml enteral feeding syringe
- Clean jug for decanting your feed
- Water for flushing the feeding tube before and after the feed
- Prescribed feed.

Further information is available from:

Freephone Dietetic Helpline:

1800 411 411

Abbott Nutrition,
Block B, Liffey Valley Office Campus
Quarryvale, Dublin 22
D22 X0Y3

www.abbottnutrition.ie

References:

1. Clinical Resource Efficiency Support Team (CREST)- Guidelines for the Management of Enteral Tube Feeding in Adults (April 2004). Available at: https://www.irspen.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/CREST_Guidelines_for_the_management_of_enteral_tube_feeding_in_adults.pdf. Accessed 31/12/2019.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

1. Collect all equipment needed
2. Check label and expiry date of feed, to ensure it is the correct product and not out of date, and check that the seal is not broken
3. Wash and dry your hands thoroughly
4. Sit in an upright position if possible
5. Check your feeding tube position if necessary, and ensure the tube is clamped if it has one
6. Fill the syringe with 30-50ml of water or as advised by your healthcare professional
7. Remove the cap from your feeding tube, attach the syringe, and unclamp your tube
8. Flush your feeding tube with the water in the syringe
9. Clamp your feeding tube and remove the syringe
10. Open the feed container according to the manufacturer/healthcare professional instructions.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

When Gravity feeding, if you hold the syringe at a lower height, this will slow the feeding rate; raising the height of the syringe will speed up the feeding rate.

IF GRAVITY FEEDING :-

follow steps 1-10 then:

- Take the plunger out of the syringe and attach the syringe to the end of your feeding tube, ensuring the tube is clamped
- Slowly pour the required amount of feed into the syringe. Your healthcare professional will tell you the amount you need, so you may need to fill the syringe more than once
- Hold the syringe at a height that is comfortable for you, unclamp your feeding tube and allow the feed to flow through your tube. This will occur naturally, due to gravity
- Clamp your feeding tube once syringe is empty
- Repeat until you have reached your required amount. Once you have taken the total amount advised by your healthcare professional, clamp your feeding tube
- Return the plunger into the syringe, and fill the syringe with 30-50ml water or as advised by your healthcare professional), and flush the water through your feeding tube
- Clamp your tube, remove the syringe and replace the cap on your feeding tube
- Unclamp your feeding tube (to avoid the tube flattening over time and becoming damaged)
- Wash and dry your hands.

IF 'PUSH' FEEDING:-

follow steps 1-10 then:

- Decant required feed into a clean jug
- Draw up the feed into the syringe
- Attach the syringe to your feeding tube
- Unclamp your feeding tube and gently syringe the feed into your feeding tube by slowly pushing the plunger
- Clamp your feeding tube and remove the syringe
- Repeat until you have reached your required amount (as advised by your healthcare professional)
- Fill the syringe with 30-50ml water or as advised by your healthcare professional) and flush the water through your feeding tube
- Clamp your tube, remove the syringe and replace the cap on your feeding tube
- Unclamp your feeding tube (to avoid the tube flattening over time and becoming damaged)
- Wash and dry your hands.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- If you have a nasogastric tube, make sure the tube is in the right position before taking any feed. Your healthcare professional will advise you on this. Also see 'How to check the position of your nasogastric feeding tube' leaflet.
- Never syringe water or feed using excessive force. No resistance should be felt.
- Never try and rush your bolus feed; your healthcare professional will advise you regarding how long you should take to complete your feed.
- Once opened, cover your feed and put it in the fridge (when not being used). Sterile feed can be used for up to 24 hours (nonsterile for up to 4 hours).¹ After this time throw the feed away if you do not use it.
- Your healthcare professional will tell you how much and what sort of water to use for flushing.