

HOW TO BOLUS FEED YOUR CHILD

WHAT IS BOLUS FEEDING?

Bolus feeding is a way of giving your child 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 child's healthcare professional, using an enteral feeding syringe.

WHY DOES YOUR CHILD NEED TO BE BOLUS FED?

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

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

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 child's feeding tube using the syringe with its plunger.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

You should only bolus feed your child if you have been advised to do so by their 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 child's 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 and further reading:

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 17/12/2019.
2. Guidelines and Audit Implementation Network. 2015. Guidelines for caring for an infant, child, or young person who requires enteral feeding. Belfast: GAIN. Available at: <https://rqia.org.uk/RQIA/files/4f/4f08bb34-7955-49ea-adf1-9de807d3da66.pdf>. Accessed 17/12/2019.

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 Check label and expiry date of feed, to ensure it is the correct product and not out of date, and check that the seal is not broken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. Get your child to sit in an upright position if possible
5. Check your child's 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 child's healthcare professional
7. Remove the cap from your child's feeding tube, attach the syringe, and unclamp your tube
8. Flush your child's feeding tube with the water in the syringe
9. Clamp your child's 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 child's feeding tube, ensuring the tube is clamped
- Slowly pour the required amount of feed into the syringe. Your child's 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 child's feeding tube and allow the feed to flow through their tube. This will occur naturally, due to gravity
- Clamp your child's feeding tube once syringe is empty
- Repeat until you have reached your child's required amount. Once they have taken the total amount advised by their healthcare professional, clamp their feeding tube
- Return the plunger into the syringe, and fill the syringe with 30-50ml water or as advised by your child's healthcare professional), and flush the water through their feeding tube
- Clamp your child's tube, remove the syringe and replace the cap on their feeding tube
- Unclamp your child's 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 child's feeding tube
- Unclamp your child's feeding tube and gently syringe the feed into their feeding tube by slowly pushing the plunger
- Clamp your child's feeding tube and remove the syringe
- Repeat until you have reached your child's required amount (as advised by their healthcare professional)
- Fill the syringe with 30-50ml water or as advised by your child's healthcare professional) and flush the water through their feeding tube
- Clamp your child's tube, remove the syringe and replace the cap on their feeding tube
- Unclamp your child's feeding tube (to avoid the tube flattening over time and becoming damaged)
- Wash and dry your hands.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- If your child has a nasogastric tube, make sure the tube is in the right position before they have any feed. Their healthcare professional will advise you on this. Also see 'How to check the position of your child's nasogastric feeding tube' leaflet.
- Never syringe water or feed using excessive force. No resistance should be felt.
- Never try and rush your child's bolus feed; their healthcare professional will advise you regarding how long you should take to complete their feed.
- Once opened, cover your child's 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 they do not use it.
- Your child's healthcare professional will tell you how much and what sort of water to use for flushing.

