

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 the healthcare professional, using an enteral feeding syringe.

WHY DO YOU NEED TO BE BOLUS FED?

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

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

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

OR

2. Syringe feeding, where the feed may need help to be pushed through the feeding tube using the syringe with its plunger.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Patients should only be bolus fed if it has 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 feed
- Water for flushing the feeding tube before and after the feed
- Prescribed feed.

For more information please contact:

Medical Information

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Abbott Pump Centre

Australia: 1800 819 831

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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 Check label and expiry date of feed, to ensure it is the correct product and not out of date, and check that the seal is not broken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 the patient in an upright position during feeding if possible (or at least at a 45 degree angle). The patient should remain in this position for 30 minutes once feeding has been completed
5. Check the feeding tube position if necessary, and ensure the tube is clamped if it has one
6. Fill the syringe with water as advised by the healthcare professional
7. Remove the cap from the feeding tube, attach the syringe, and unclamp the tube
8. Flush the feeding tube with the water in the syringe
9. Clamp the feeding tube and remove the syringe
10. Gently shake the feed before opening. 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 the feeding tube, ensuring the tube is clamped
- Slowly pour the required amount of feed into the syringe. The healthcare professional will advise the amount that the patient needs, so you may need to fill the syringe more than once
- Hold the syringe at a height that is comfortable for you, unclamp the feeding tube and allow the feed to flow through the tube. This will occur naturally, due to gravity
- Clamp the feeding tube once syringe is empty
- Repeat until you have reached the required amount. Once the patient has taken the total amount advised by the healthcare professional, clamp the feeding tube
- Return the plunger into the syringe, and fill the syringe with water as advised by the healthcare professional and flush the water through the feeding tube
- Clamp the tube, remove the syringe and replace the cap on the feeding tube
- Unclamp the feeding tube (to avoid the tube flattening over time and becoming damaged)
- Wash and dry your hands.

IF SYRINGE FEEDING:

follow steps 1-10 then:

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

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- If the patient has a nasogastric tube, make sure the tube is in the right position before providing any feed. The healthcare professional will advise you on this.
- Never syringe water or feed using excessive force. No resistance should be felt.
- Never try and rush the bolus feed; the healthcare professional will advise you regarding how long the patient should take to complete the feed.
- Once opened, cover the feed and put it in the fridge (when not being used). When you want to use it again, remove from the fridge 30 mins prior to feeding to allow it to reach room temperature. 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 it has not been used.
- The healthcare professional will tell you how much and what sort of water to use for flushing.

Reference: 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.

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