

# FEEDING USING A GRAVITY FEEDING SET

## WHAT IS GRAVITY FEEDING?

Gravity feeding is a way of receiving a set amount of prescribed feed via a feeding tube if a patient is unable to take the full nutritional requirements by mouth. The feed that the patient receives contains the nutrients needed to meet their nutritional requirements. The feed is given using a gravity feeding set at a speed recommended by their dietitian.

## WHAT DO YOU NEED?

- Prescribed feed
- Water to flush the feeding tube before and after the feed
- 60ml enteral feeding syringe
- Gravity feeding set
- Watch or clock with second hand
- Hook to hang up feeding container

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Patients should only be gravity fed if they have been advised to do so by a healthcare professional as this method of feeding is not suitable for everyone.
- If the patient has a nasogastric feeding tube, you need to make sure the tube is in the right position before they have any feed or water.

For more information please contact:

**Medical Information**

medicalinformation@abbott.com

**Abbott Pump Centre**

**Australia:** 1800 819 831

**New Zealand:** 0800 738 090



## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

1. Collect all the equipment required
2. Check the label and expiry date on the feed to make sure it is the correct product and not out of date
3. Wash and dry your hands thoroughly
4. Make sure the patient sits in an upright position while feeding if possible (or at least at a 45 degree angle). The patient should remain in this position for 30 mins once feeding has been completed
5. Gently shake the feed prior to removing the cap. Remove the cap from the feed container and check that the foil seal is not broken
6. Open the gravity feeding set and close the purple roller clamp on the feeding set
7. Use the screw cap of the feeding set to attach the set to the feeding container
8. Hang the feeding container on a hook or similar device. This should ideally be above head height
9. Squeeze the drip chamber on the gravity feeding set until it is approximately one-third full of feed
10. Open the purple roller clamp on the feeding set and allow the tubing to fill with feed. Close the clamp
11. Check the feeding tube position if necessary, and ensure the tube is clamped if it has one
12. Fill the syringe with water as advised by the healthcare professional
13. Remove the cap from the feeding tube, attach the syringe, and unclamp the tube
14. Flush the feeding tube with the water in the syringe
15. Clamp the feeding tube and remove the syringe
16. Attach the gravity feeding set to the feeding tube (release the clamp on the feeding tube if it has one)
17. Slowly open the purple clamp on the feeding set until the feed starts to drip into the drip chamber. (N.B. The more you unroll the clamp, the faster the drips will fall). Factors that may affect the rate include: the height of the feed bottle, the position of the patient, intra-abdominal pressure eg. Constipation
18. Adjust the purple clamp to get the correct speed of drips for the normal feeding rate, as directed by the healthcare professional

Approximate drip counts to achieve a desired feed rate:<sup>1</sup>

mls/hr	No. of drops/minute
25	7
50	13
75	20
100	27
125	33
150	40
175	47
200	53

19. Use your watch or clock to time the feeding rate
20. If the feed is flowing too fast, you need to close the purple clamp slightly. If the feed is flowing too slowly, you need to open the clamp slightly
21. Once you have established the desired feeding rate, you can continue to feed until the volume of feed you require has been completed

22. When the patient has had the required amount of feed, close the purple roller clamp and clamp the feeding tube. Remove the feeding set from the tube
23. As per steps 12 - 15 flush the feeding tube with water (Unclamp the feeding tube once you have removed the syringe and replaced the cap on the feeding tube, to avoid the tube flattening over time and becoming damaged)
24. Wash and dry your hands.

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

If you experience any difficulties, contact the patient's healthcare professional for advice.

Reference: 1. DAA Enteral Nutrition Manual for Adults in Healthcare Facilities pg 15

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