

HOW TO BOLUS FEED A CHILD

WHAT IS BOLUS FEEDING?

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

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

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

WHY DOES YOUR CHILD NEED TO BE BOLUS FED?

The child's healthcare professional has chosen gravity/bolus feeding as a way to manage their 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. The child's healthcare professional will advise on the best method for them.

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

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

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



For more information please contact:

Medical Information
medicalinformation@abbott.com

Abbott Pump Centre
Australia: 1800 819 831
New Zealand: 0800 738 090



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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 Check label and expiry date of feed, to ensure it is the correct product and not out of date, and check that the seal is not broken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. Get the child to sit in an upright position during feeding if possible (or at least at a 45 degree angle). They should remain in this position for 30 minutes once feeding has been completed
5. Check the child's 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 child's healthcare professional
7. Remove the cap from the child's feeding tube, attach the syringe, and unclamp your tube
8. Flush the child's feeding tube with the water in the syringe
9. Clamp the child's 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 child's feeding tube, ensuring the tube is clamped
- Slowly pour the required amount of feed into the syringe. The 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 the child's feeding tube and allow the feed to flow through their tube. This will occur naturally, due to gravity
- Clamp the child's feeding tube once syringe is empty
- Repeat until you have reached the 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 water as advised by the child's healthcare professional, and flush the water through their feeding tube
- Clamp the child's tube, remove the syringe and replace the cap on their feeding tube
- Unclamp the child's 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 child's feeding tube
- Unclamp the child's feeding tube and gently syringe the feed into their feeding tube by slowly pushing the plunger
- Clamp the child's feeding tube and remove the syringe
- Repeat until you have reached the child's required amount (as advised by their healthcare professional)
- Fill the syringe with water as advised by the child's healthcare professional) and flush the water through their feeding tube
- Clamp the child's tube, remove the syringe and replace the cap on their feeding tube
- Unclamp the child's feeding tube (to avoid the tube flattening over time and becoming damaged)
- Wash and dry your hands.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- If the 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.
- Never syringe water or feed using excessive force. No resistance should be felt.
- Never try and rush the child's bolus feed; their healthcare professional will advise you regarding how long you should take to complete their feed.
- Once opened, cover the child's 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 they do not use it.
- The child's 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 17/12/2019.

Further reading:

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/4f4f08bb34-7955-49ea-adf1-9de807d3da66.pdf>. Accessed 17/12/2019.