Gastrostomy Tube Interventional Radiology Home Care
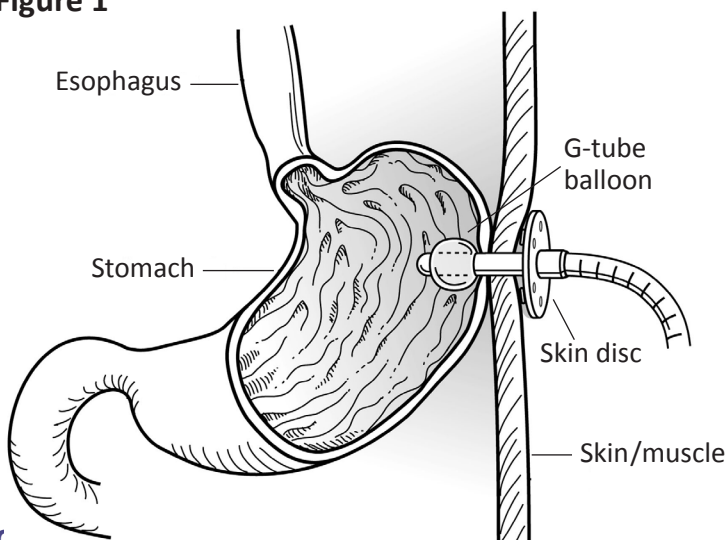
If you have any questions, please call the Department of Interventional Radiology at 312.926.5200.

The Interventional Radiology (IR) team placed a tube in your stomach called a gastrostomy tube (G-tube). A G-tube is a small flexible tube that goes through your skin into your stomach. It can be used to give you the nutrition or medication you need.

A small balloon at the end of the G-tube holds it in place inside your stomach. On the outside, you will have a small plastic "skin" disc that fits against your skin (Figure 1).

Figure 1
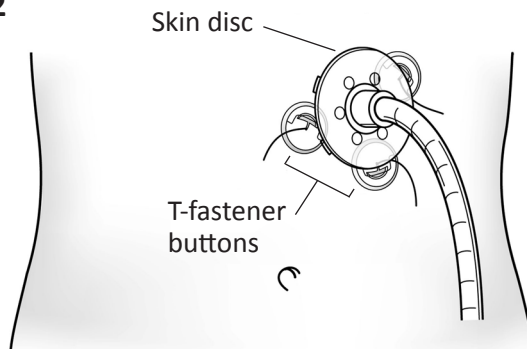

Esophagus

G-tube balloon

Stomach

Skin disc

Skin/muscle

Caring for your G-tube at home

After the G-tube is placed, you will have 2 to 3 T-fastener buttons on your abdomen under the skin disc (Figure 2). They help secure the G-tube while your incision heals. Sutures (stitches) will hold them in place. Your physician will decide when to remove the T-fastener buttons.

Figure 2

Skin disc

T-fastener buttons

Activity

You may shower 24 hours after the G-tube is placed. Do not take a tub bath until the site is healed in about 6 weeks.

You may go back to your normal activities as you are able. You may feel mild discomfort at the tube site for about 1 week.

Care guidelines
- **Do not clamp the tube.** This can cause the balloon to break. If the balloon breaks, the tube may come out.
- Always wash your hands with liquid soap for 1 to 2 minutes before touching the tube or giving yourself a feeding or medication.
- Keep the skin under the disk clean and dry. You can put a split gauze bandage under the skin disk to collect drainage. A small amount of drainage is normal. Change the bandage every day.
- If you notice mild redness under the skin disk, you can apply a small amount of barrier cream with zinc oxide (such as Desitin®) as needed.
- Check the skin around the tube site every day for redness, bleeding, drainage or problems with the tube hole becoming larger. You can use a mirror to see all sides of the tube site.
- You can attach the tube to your skin using bandage tape for your comfort.

Before you go home, your nurse will teach you how to:
- Care for your tube
- Give yourself feedings or medication using the tube
- Flush the tube before and after giving feedings or medication

A dietitian will meet with you to discuss what type of formula or supplement you will use at home.

Follow-up

If you go home with the T-fasteners still in place, they may fall off on their own. If they do not fall off after 2 weeks, you will need to come back to the IR Department to have them taken out. This should only take about 10 minutes. Call the Department of Interventional Radiology at 312.926.5200 (TTY 711), to make an appointment or if you have any questions about your G-tube.

The IR Department is on the 4th floor of Feinberg Pavilion. Parking is available at 222 East Huron Street, across from Feinberg and Galter pavilions. For a discounted rate, bring your parking ticket with you. You can validate your ticket at the Customer Service Desks on the 1st or 2nd floors of Feinberg and Galter pavilions.

When to call the IR Department

Call the Department of Interventional Radiology if you have any of these symptoms:

- Reddened skin around the tube site that is swollen, warm to the touch or painful
- A temperature more than 100.9 degrees F
- Skin redness or irritation that lasts longer than 2 to 3 days
- Large amounts of drainage with swelling and skin breakdown around the tube site
- The tube cannot be flushed or feedings do not run into the tube
- The tube site opening gets bigger or is leaking stomach contents
- The tube is moving farther out from your skin or the tube falls out

If any of these happen, call the Department of Interventional Radiology at 312.926.5200 (TTY: 711) between 7 am and 5 pm, Monday through Friday. After 5 pm, or on weekends or holidays, please leave a message with the answering service. A staff member will call you back.

If your tube falls out and you cannot reach the Department of Interventional Radiology, go to the nearest emergency department.