



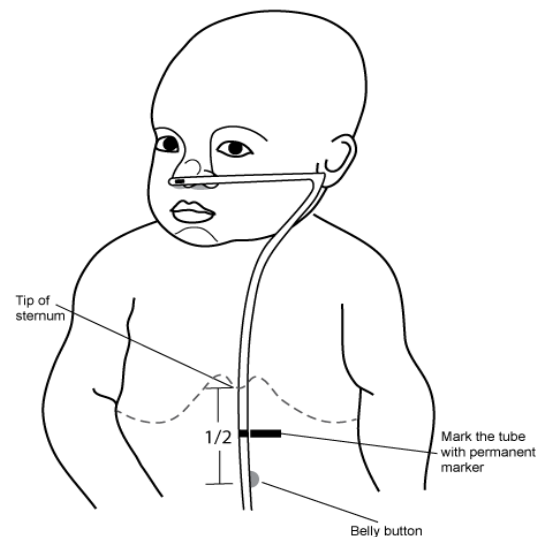
# How to Place a Feeding Tube

## What equipment do I need?

- Feeding tube
- 10 mL or larger syringe for checking stomach contents
- Tape
- A cup of water or water-soluble lubricating jelly (do not use petroleum jelly as this will clog the tube)
- For infants, a blanket for swaddling during the insertion
- Permanent marker

## What are the instructions?

1. Wash your hands.
2. If the feeding tube has a metal stylet or inner wire, remove it and throw away.
3. Measure and mark the correct length of the tube as follows:
  - Measure the tube distance from the nose to the earlobe, then from the earlobe to midway between the lower tip of the sternum and the belly button. Mark the tube with a permanent marker.
  - Check your measurement more than once to ensure correct length for placement.
4. To help your child from grabbing the tube during the insertion:
  - You may need a second person or offer some type of distraction to help older children remain still.



- Infants and small babies can be swaddled (wrapped) with a blanket for the insertion.
5. Moisten the end of the tube with water or lubricating jelly. Slowly insert the tube through the nose until the mark you made on the tube reaches the nose. It may be helpful for older children to swallow and bring their chin down toward their chest during the insertion.
  6. Gently tape the tube to your child's cheek.

**Remove the tube and replace it if:**

- Your child has difficulty breathing, coughing or bluish skin after placement of the tube **or if:**
- You see the tube in the back of mouth.

### **How do I check that the tube is in the right place?**

Before giving medications and feeding **always confirm** the tube is placed in the right place in the stomach. To make sure the tube is where it needs to be follow these steps every time before you use the tube.

1. Check to make sure the mark on the tube is at the child's nostril
2. Look for coiling of the tube in the mouth.
3. Draw stomach contents through the tube as follows:
  - Attach the 10mL or larger syringe to the end of the feeding tube
  - Pull the plunger back slowly to check for stomach contents
  - Contents should be light yellow, light green or contain formula or breast milk.
  - If you are not able to obtain any stomach contents, position your child on their side, inject 1 to 5 mL of air. This may help to move the tip of the tube from the stomach wall. Wait 5 minutes and attempt to slowly withdrawal contents again.

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by University of Michigan (U-M) Health for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by U-M Health and for which U-M Health does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Patient Education by [U-M Health](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License](#). Last Revised 04/2023