

Water is part of your formula, but extra water and sometimes medications are needed to keep your body healthy and your feeding tube working properly.

Your healthcare professional will tell you how much water or medication to take.

Crush medications into fine particles or use liquid medications when available. Check with your nurse, doctor or pharmacist to get specific instructions on:

- How to crush medications
- How much water to mix with your medication
- Which medications should not be crushed
- Medications that need special considerations when given through a feeding tube

**When administering water and medications, follow all the steps below:**

*See below for guidelines on how to flush your feeding tube with water only.*

1. Do NOT add medication directly to your tube feeding formula, unless specifically directed to by your healthcare professional.
2. Avoid mixing medications together during administration. Administer each medication separately.
3. Using a 20 mL or larger syringe\*, flush your feeding tube with at least 15 mL of lukewarm water before administering medication (unless instructed otherwise by your healthcare professional). Do not force the water flush. If you have difficulty flushing your feeding tube, contact your healthcare professional. **See Figure 1.**



**Figure 1**

## Flushing Your Feeding Tube

To keep your feeding tube clean and prevent clogging, flush your tube with water several times a day or as directed by your healthcare professional. Flush your tube before and after giving medications and before and after giving formula. Your healthcare professional will prescribe how much water you should receive.

**Follow the steps below to flush your tube:**

1. Fill a clean measuring cup with lukewarm water. (Avoid using cold water as this can cause cramping).
2. Using a 60 mL syringe\*, put the tip of the syringe in the water and draw up the prescribed amount of water into the syringe.
3. Open (uncap) your feeding tube or feeding tube extension and attach the syringe.
4. Gently push on the plunger to flush with the prescribed amount of water, as directed by your healthcare professional.
5. Close (recap) feeding tube or feeding tube extension when flush is complete.

\*or appropriate size syringe directed by your healthcare professional

# Giving Medications Through a Feeding Tube

- Using a 20 mL or larger syringe\*, draw up correct dose of medication or water for flushing into syringe. **See Figure 2.** Open your feeding tube or feeding tube extension and connect the syringe to your feeding tube **See Figure 3** or feeding tube extension. **See Figure 4.**
- Gently push the water and medication into the feeding tube **See Figure 3** or feeding tube extension. **See Figure 4.**
- Remove the syringe from your feeding tube or feeding tube extension and refill the syringe with at least 15 mL of lukewarm water or the amount directed by your healthcare professional to flush after the medication.
- Repeat each step with each medication, always rinsing your syringe between medications.
- Flush a final time with at least 15 mL of lukewarm water. (unless instructed otherwise by your healthcare professional).
- Close (recap) your feeding tube or feeding tube extension when finished and place the cap back on the end of the syringe.



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

\*or appropriate size syringe directed by your healthcare professional