

Your Mouth

Regardless of the type and location of your feeding tube, it's important to maintain good oral health. The following steps are recommended to keep your mouth as clean as possible. Follow any other special instructions from your healthcare professionals.

- Brush your teeth, gums and tongue at least two times a day using a soft toothbrush and toothpaste.
- To moisten your mouth, use oral swabs, ice chips or sugar-free chewing gum.
- Freshen your mouth and breath by using mouthwash. For children, check with your healthcare professional.
- To moisten your lips, use lip balm or a lanolin-based moisturizing cream. To prevent chapping, avoid licking your lips.
- Report bleeding or anything unusual in your mouth to your healthcare professional.

Your Nose

If you are receiving your feeding through a nasogastric or nasointestinal tube, the tube passing through your nose may cause mild soreness or you may notice some thick, crusty mucus in your nostrils.

It is important to take care of your nose.

Follow these steps:

- On a daily basis, change the tape holding your tube in place.
- When retaping, allow some slack so that the tube does not rub against your nostrils.
- Clean your nostrils at least once a day with a soft washcloth or cotton swabs moistened with warm water.
- Remove sticky tape residue with a special adhesive remover.
- Remove crusting on the nostril with warm water on a cotton swab.
- Apply a lip balm or lanolin-based moisturizing cream to the inside edges of the nostril.
- Report any redness, bleeding or numbness to your healthcare professional.

Your Tube Site

If you have a gastrostomy or jejunostomy tube, care of the skin surrounding the feeding site is very important.

Follow these steps:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.
- Remove the old dressing and tape, being careful not to disturb the tube.
- Cleanse the skin around the tube daily with soap and water as directed by your healthcare professional.
- To remove any crusting around the tube site, use cotton swabs moistened with warm water.
- Check the tube site every day for signs of redness, soreness, swelling or unusual drainage. Report anything unusual to your healthcare professional.
- Dry the skin around the feeding tube site thoroughly. Healed gastrostomy or jejunostomy sites usually do not need a special dressing. If you have been told to apply a dressing, follow the instructions from your healthcare professional.

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