

Nutrition Team

Having a Naso–Jejunal (NJ) tube placed at the bedside using magnetic imaging (CORTRAK)

This leaflet is for patients who may benefit from having an NJ (Naso–Jejunal) tube to help with nutrition and hydration. It should be with advice from the nutrition team or a dietitian, as this procedure is not suitable for everyone.

Naso–Jejunal (NJ) tube

An NJ tube is a long, thin plastic tube that goes in through your nostril. It follows the path of your food pipe, passes into your stomach, and then into your bowel.

This tube is used for patients who cannot get enough nutrition by eating and when feeding into the stomach is not recommended or has not worked.

How is the tube inserted?

This tube is inserted at your bedside by a nurse or doctor who has been specially trained to do this.

They will start by placing a small sensor on your chest. This sensor tracks the tip of the NJ tube inside your body and shows its path on a screen as the tube is gently passed through. As it moves through your stomach and into your bowel, the screen displays the route the tube is taking.

Once the person inserting the tube is happy with its position, it will be



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secured to your nose or cheek with tape. A copy of the image from the screen is printed and kept in your medical notes. The position of the tube at your nostril is measured in centimetres (cm), and this will be explained to you. Sometimes, an abdominal X-ray may be needed to confirm that the tip is in the right place.

After the tube is in place, a dietitian will visit you to prescribe a liquid feed tailored to your nutritional needs. This feed contains all the calories, protein, vitamins and minerals your body needs. It will be given using a feeding pump, which may run continuously over 24 hours at first. As your body gets used to it, the feed may be given over a shorter period of time.

Frequently asked questions

Do I need to sign a consent form?

You do not need to sign a consent form. The person carrying out the procedure will explain what they are going to do beforehand. If you are unable to take part in this discussion, for example, if you are on a ventilator, the procedure will be done based on what is in your best interests at the time.

Will it hurt?

The person placing the tube will reassure you throughout the procedure. Because the nose and throat are sensitive areas, some people may find it uncomfortable. If at any point you want to stop, just let them know.

Will you be able to eat and drink?

These tubes are usually used when there are problems with the stomach. You may be advised not to eat and to have fluids only. In some cases, you may be asked to have nothing by mouth, for example, if you are being sick. The team looking after you will explain what's best in your situation.

Can you go home?

People do go home with these tubes in place. You will be given training on how to look after the tube by the community nutrition nurses.

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How do you know if the tube has moved?

These tubes are very long but can sometimes move from the bowel back into the stomach. Each time you use the tube, check that the cm marking at your nostril is the same. If the tube has moved, stop the feed and contact the nutrition team for advice.

If you are sick (vomiting) or have abdominal bloating, stop the feed and contact the nutrition team.

Where do you get your feed and equipment from?

Before you go home, you will be given a feeding pump (if needed), along with a small supply of feed, giving sets and syringes.

Once you are at home, a company called **Homeward** will deliver all the feed and equipment you need. Alternatively, you may collect your feed from your local chemist. This will be arranged by your dietitian.

Can you have a bath or shower?

Yes you can. Just be aware of the cm marking at your nostril. The tape holding the tube may need to be changed after a shower, and you will be shown how to do this before you go home.

What happens if your tube comes out?

Check the cm marking at your nostril. If the tube has come out, stop using it and contact the nutrition team for advice.

Can you go out with the NJ tube in?

Yes. Your feed can be scheduled so you can go out without it, or a carry pack can be provided if you need to keep the feed running.

How long will you need the tube in for?

You will need to discuss this with your medical team.

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Contact numbers

If you have any concerns or need more information, please contact any of the team members below. They will be happy to answer your questions:

Nutrition Team at UHCW NHS Trust: 024 7696 6074 or 024 7696 7177

Community Nutrition Nurses: 024 7696 6094 or 07733225026

Coventry Dietitians: 024 7696 6161

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format contact 024 7696 6074 or 024 7696 7177 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

Did we get it right?

We would like you to tell us what you think about our services. This helps us make further improvements and recognise members of staff who provide a good service.

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