

A Prevention Guide to Common Tube-Feeding Skin Care Issues

Tube-feeding is a life-sustaining means of nutritional support for millions of patients. When the skin around the tube becomes compromised, complications may develop. Below are helpful tips for the most common feeding tube-related skin issues:

LEAKAGE

around the site can occur if the tube fits too loosely.

- Adjust the external bolster height and/or balloon volume as needed.
- Apply a skin protectant or moisture barrier.
- Use a short-term dressing, such as gauze to absorb drainage.

The external bolster is the part of the tube that sits against the skin.



PRESSURE NECROSIS

may develop if the external bolster fits too tightly. You may notice redness, irritation and pain around the tube.

- If the tube has a balloon, verify that it is filled with the correct amount of water.
- If the tube does not have a balloon, adjust the height of the external bolster.



HYPERGRANULATION TISSUE

appears as discolored, irritated and raised skin tissue around the tube.

- Prevent it by using only mild soap and water for daily cleaning.
- Stabilize the tube to restrict movement that may further irritate the skin.
- Treatment may include foam dressings to apply pressure and absorb moisture, silver nitrate sticks, moisture barriers and/or steroid creams.



BACTERIAL INFECTION

may occur if moisture remains around the site. You may notice pain, inflammation, redness or drainage with an odor or color.

- Wash your hands before touching your skin or the tube itself.
- Clean the site two to three times daily with warm water and keep it dry.
- Your doctor will determine if an oral or topical antibiotic is needed.



YEAST INFECTION

may occur as a result of excessive moisture from leakage or perspiration. It may present as a rash with swelling and sores.

- Gently cleanse and dry the skin around the tube.
- If you use a dressing, change it when it becomes moist.
- Your doctor may suggest antifungal powder or other treatments.



Important note: This information is intended for educational purposes. Please contact your healthcare professional for specific treatment options.

Daily Tips to Prevent Tube-Related Skin Issues

Most tube-related skin issues can be prevented with routine monitoring and care of the stoma site.

1 **Wash your hands and all related supplies** every time you touch the tube or the skin around it to prevent infection.



2 **Rotate the tube ¼ turn.** It should rotate freely. Do not rotate jejunostomy tubes.



3 **Check the external bolster height** (*there should be about the thickness of a dime between the bolster and the skin*) both while sitting and lying flat.

The external bolster is the part of the tube that sits against the skin.



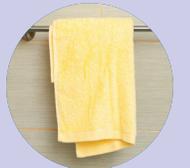
4 **Check the balloon volume weekly,** as per the physician (if applicable). Make sure it is filled with the recommended amount of water.



5 **Clean the area,** including underneath the external bolster, with mild soap and water.



6 **Keep the skin area dry around the feeding tube.** Apply gauze if recommended by your healthcare professional.



7 **Secure the tube to clothing** to prevent damage to the skin from excessive pulling on the tube.



8 **Replace the tube immediately** if it comes out, or secure it with tape until it can be replaced. If left open, the hole can close up within a few hours.



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