# 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

Great care must be taken to ensure proper placement and fit of the tube to prevent leakage. 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

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

Hypergranulation tissue appears as discolored, irritated and raised skin tissue around the tube. It may present as a rash with swelling and sores.

- 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

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

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.

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

For additional tube-feeding tips and resources, visit [shieldhealthcare.com/community/nutrition](http://shieldhealthcare.com/community/nutrition)
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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