



Home Tube Feeding: How to Troubleshoot and Manage Common Complications

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MEDICAL SUPPLIES FOR CARE AT HOME SINCE 1957

Introduction



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This information is intended for educational purposes.
Contact your healthcare professional about your treatment plan.

Objectives



Tube Feeding Basics Review



Common Complications

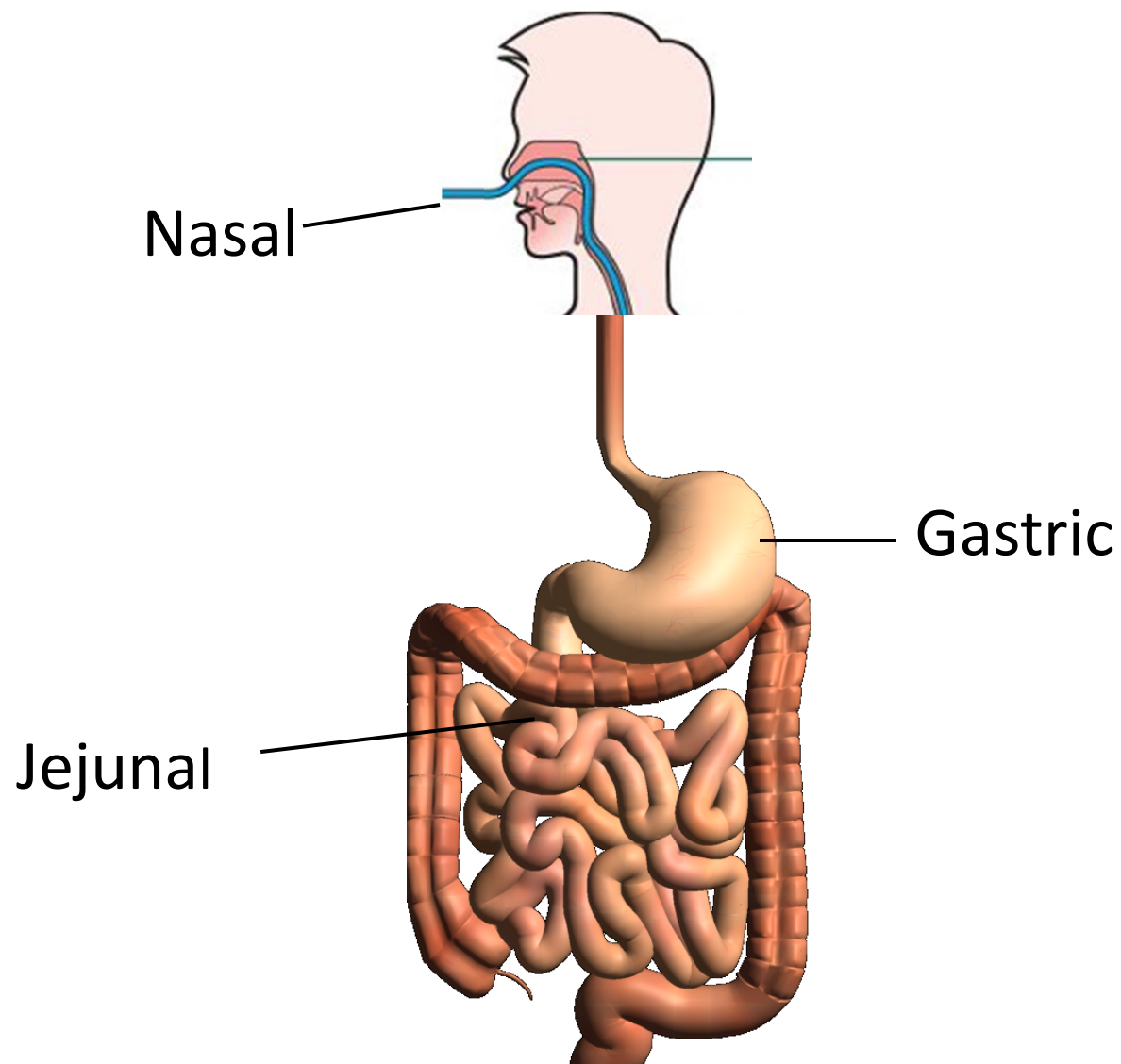


Troubleshooting



Solutions

Feeding Routes



Feeding Tubes



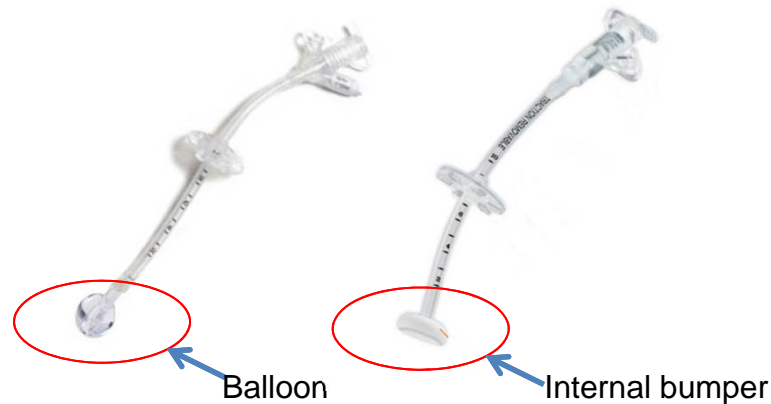
Nasogastric
(NG tube)



Regular
Gastrostomy
(G-tube)



Low Profile
Gastrostomy
(G-tube Button)



Non-balloon button



Feeding Methods

Bolus



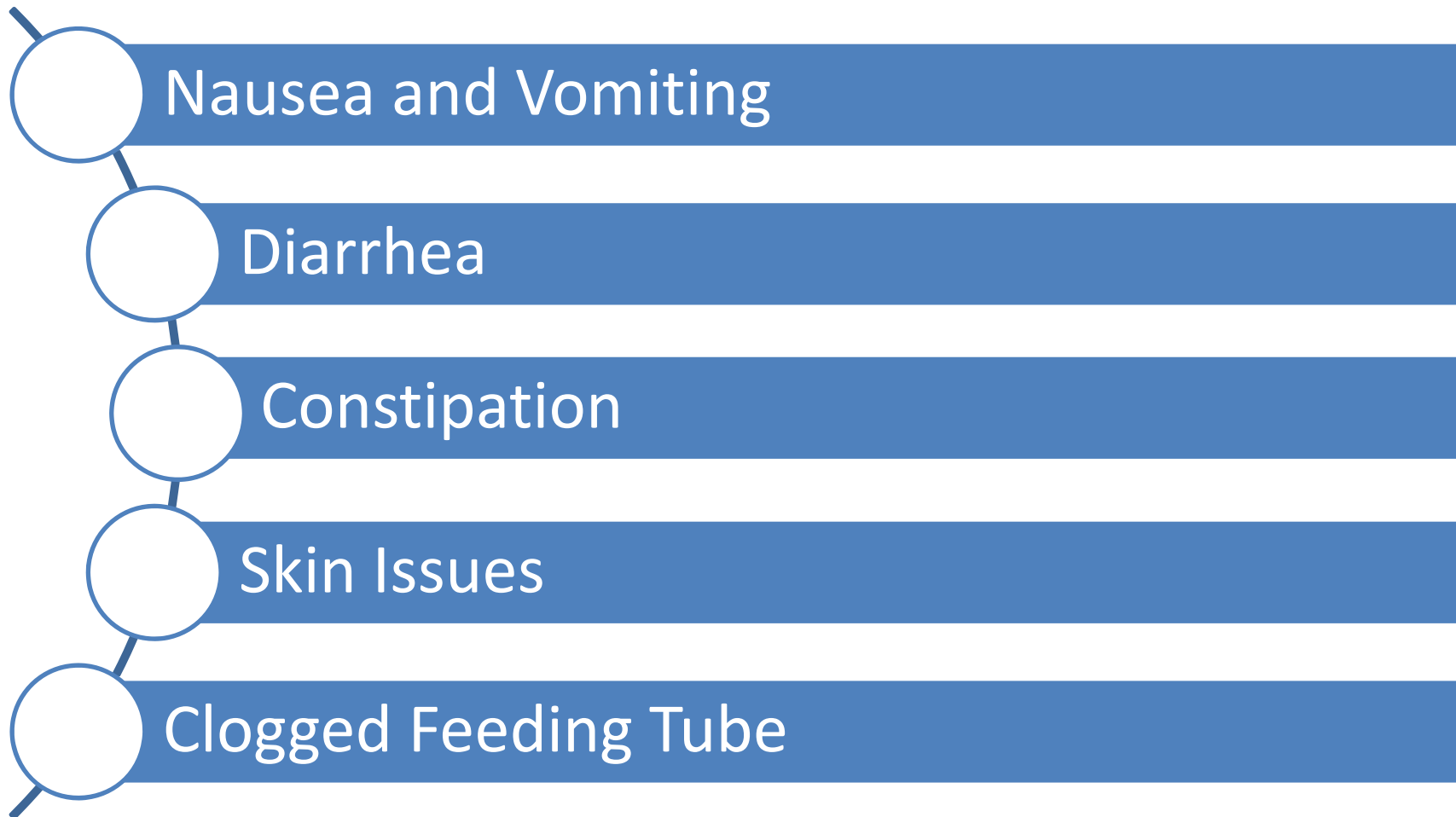
Gravity



Pump



Common Tube Feeding Complications



Why Prevent Complications?



Reduce Hospital Readmissions,
ER Visits



Prevent Malnutrition



Improve Quality of Life

Nausea and Vomiting



Is the formula too fast?



Nausea and Vomiting



Is the tube in the right place?

- Check the external length of the tube OR
- Check the amount of water in the balloon



Nausea and Vomiting



Is it constipation?

- Check for last bowel movement
- Check the abdomen for hardness/distension



Nausea and Vomiting



More tips for nausea and vomiting

- Sit upright or keep the head of the bed at 30 degrees
 - During and for at least 30 minutes after the feeding
- Use room-temperature formula
- Separate water flushes from the feeding



Diarrhea



Is it the tube feeding?

- Too much too fast?
 - Slow it down
- Too concentrated?
 - Consider 1 or 1.2 kcal/mL
- Poor absorption?
 - If malabsorption is suspected:
 - Consider a hydrolyzed or “pre-digested” formula

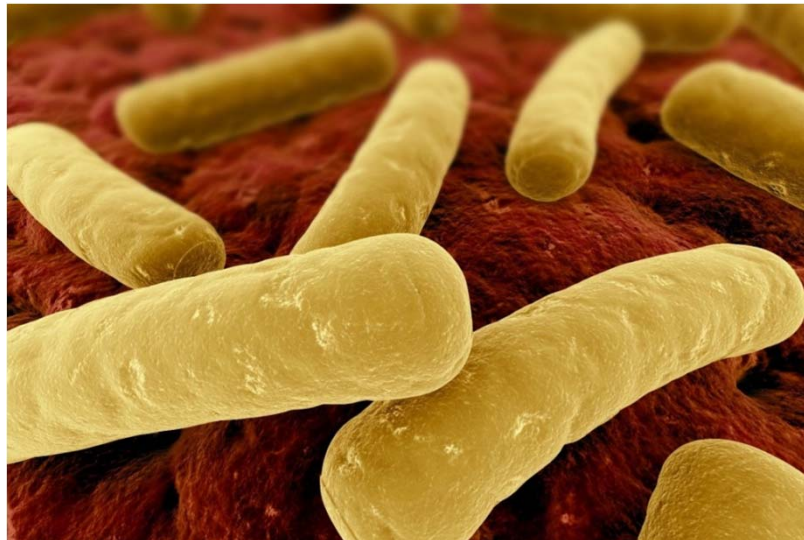


Diarrhea



Is it infection?

- Ask your doctor if you need a stool test
 - This is especially important if:
 - You have taken antibiotics in the last few months
 - You have had gastrointestinal infections in the past



Diarrhea



Is it medication?

- Some medications can cause loose stools
 - Antibiotics
 - Laxatives
 - Pro-motility agents
 - Liquid medications containing sorbitol



Diarrhea

More tips for diarrhea

- Hydration
- Probiotic supplements
 - Prevention of antibiotic-associated diarrhea
 - Lactobacillus rhamnosus GG (Culturelle)
 - Lactobacillus casei and acidophilus (Bio-K+)
 - Saccharomyces boulardii (Florastor)
- Fiber
 - Try a formula that contains fiber



Constipation

Are you getting enough water?

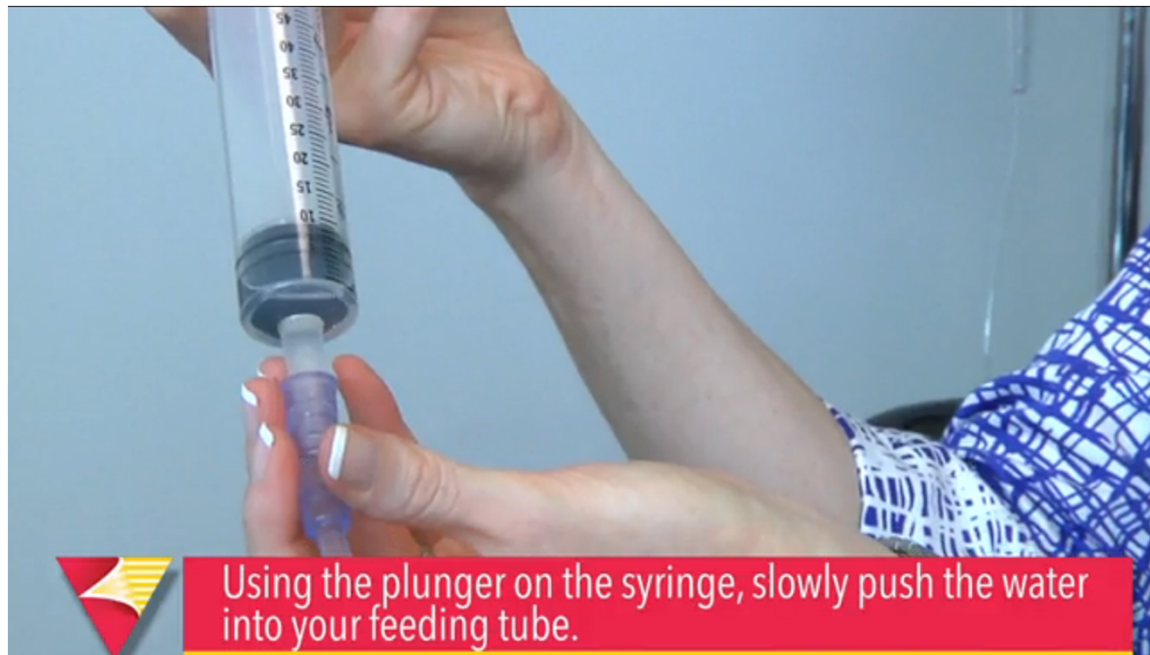
- Your formula contains water but you may need to add extra water through your tube to meet your fluid needs



Constipation

Are you getting enough water?

- Ask your doctor or dietitian how much additional water you should take every day



Constipation

Are you getting enough fiber?

Soluble fiber

- Draws water into colon to prevent hard stools
- Pectin
- Guar gum
- Oat fiber



Insoluble fiber

- Adds bulk to speed transit time
- Soy fiber

Skin Issues



Healthy Stoma Site



Leakage Around the Tube



Is the tube too loose?

- Check the external bolster or balloon volume
- Apply a skin protectant or moisture barrier
- Use a short-term dressing to absorb drainage



Pressure Necrosis



Is the tube too tight?

- Check the external bolster or balloon volume

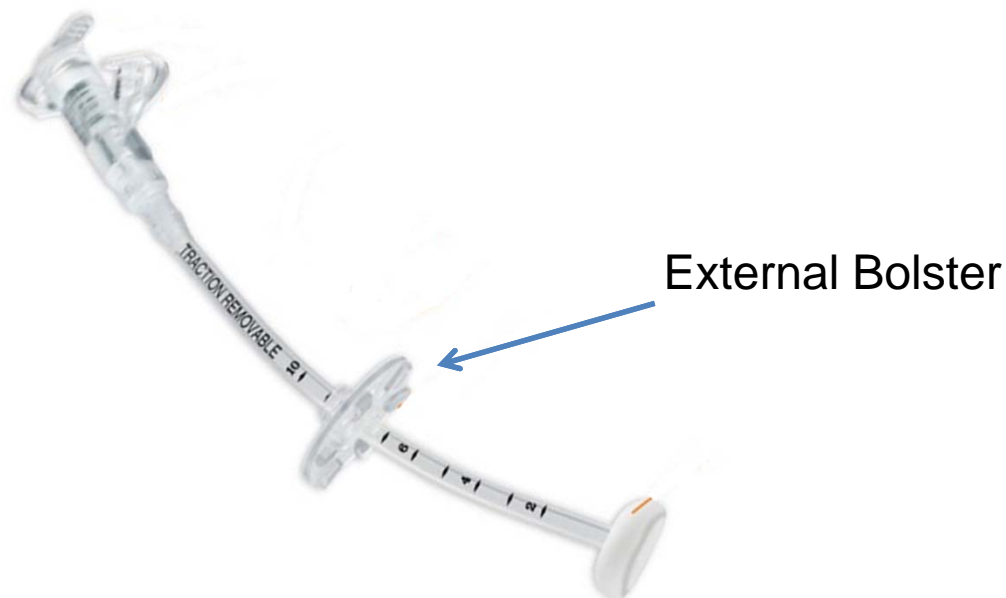


External Bolster

Checking the External Bolster



- Note the markings on the tube where the external bolster is sitting
- Slide the external bolster up or down to adjust



Checking Balloon Volume



1. Determine the amount the balloon should hold
2. Use a 10 mL syringe to deflate the balloon and note the amount.
3. Re-inflate with the correct amount of sterile **water**
 - Air can seep out and deflate balloon
 - Saline can clog the access port



Hypergranulation Tissue



Is something irritating your skin?

- Use only mild soap and water for daily cleaning
- Stabilize the tube to restrict movement



Bacterial or Yeast Infection

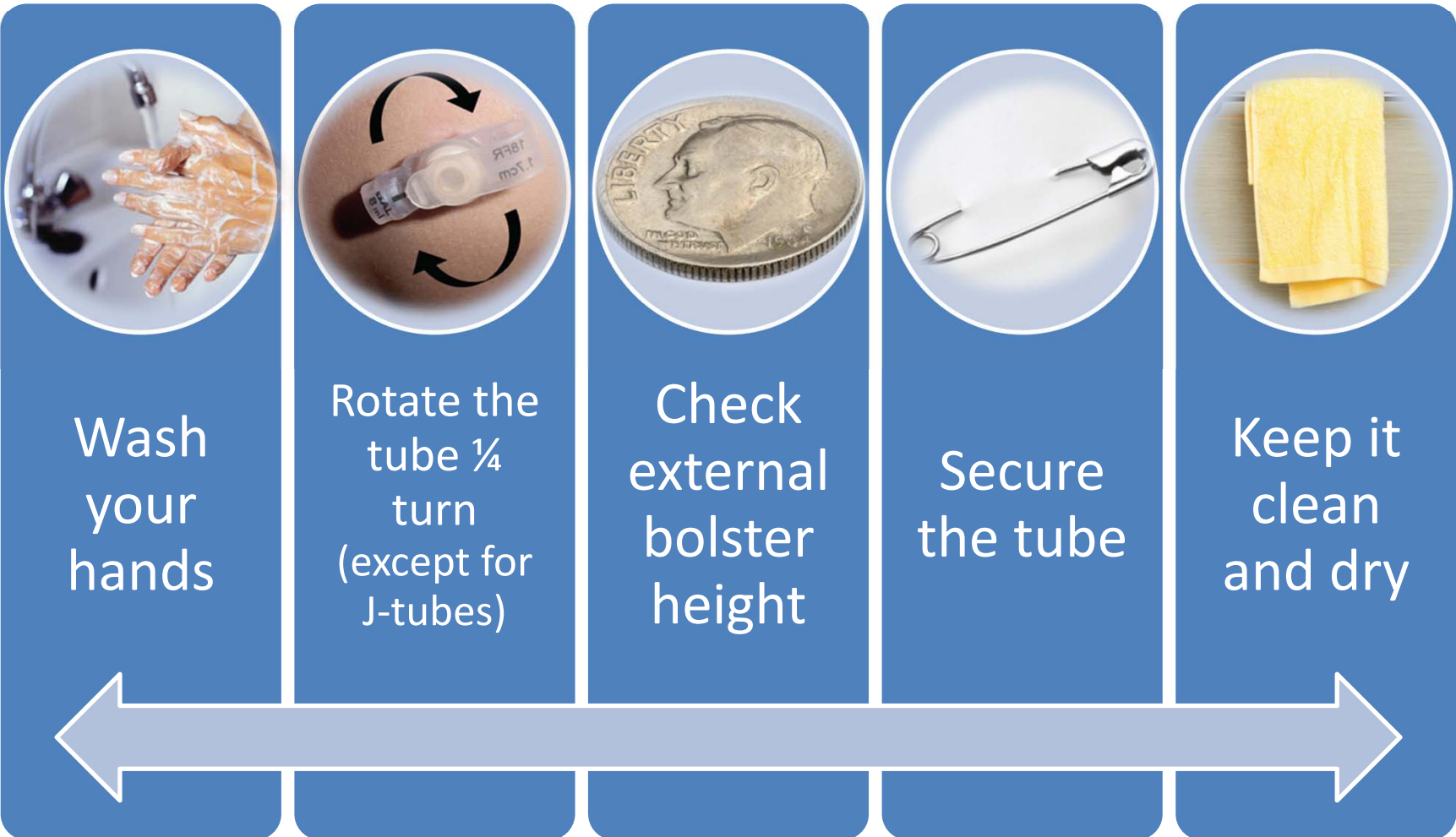


Is the skin too moist?

- Wash your hands before touching the skin
- Clean the site daily and keep it dry



Daily Skin Care Tips



Clogged Feeding Tube



Preventing a Clogged Tube

- Flush the tube regularly with water
 - Every time you use it
 - Every few hours when not in use



Clogged Feeding Tube



Preventing a Clogged Tube

- Give medications separately from formula
 1. Stop the feeding and flush the tube with water
 2. Give each medication separately
 3. Flush your tube with water after each medication



Clogged Feeding Tube

To Clear the Clog at Home



Push warm water into your tube with a 60 mL syringe



Gently push and pull the plunger to loosen the clog

NOTE: Avoid pulling back on the plunger if you have a J-tube



Clamp your tube and let the water “soak” for 15 minutes



Try gently massaging the tubing with your fingertips

Reference



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Silver HJ et al. Older adults receiving home enteral nutrition: enteral regimen, provider involvement, and health care outcomes. *J Parenter Enteral Nutr*. 2004;28(2):92-98.



This concludes our presentation. Thank you for joining us.

For more information on tube feeding and nutrition:

- shieldhealthcare.com/community/nutrition



- youtube.com/shieldhealthcare



Contact Amy: rd@shieldhealthcare.com
Shield HealthCare