

Gastrostomy Tube Removal

Preparation and after-care guide



Your primary treating Doctor decides with your dietician about permanent removal of your Gastrostomy. Usually, they will try a period of 6 months where the tube is not required at all before finalising and documenting this decision.

You can then make an appointment with the PEG clinic for removal.

Before your appointment:

- Take any medications at least 4 hours before your appointment. Any medications that need to be timed more closely should be given with as much time as possible between giving them and tube removal to avoid medication loss through the stoma once the tube is removed.
- Have a light meal 3 hours before your appointment, then nil by mouth 2 hours prior.

After removal of the gastrostomy tube:

- Your child's tract will start to close within hours, but it can take many weeks, or even months to close completely. It may leak during this time. After the tract closes, your child will have a small scar that may look like a dimple or a second belly button. In some children, the stoma does not heal on its own and needs to be surgically closed.
- A dressing will be placed when removed. The clinic can advise on the options for purchase after this.
- Change the dressing as often as necessary to keep the surrounding skin and stoma dry. It may only need a Band-Aid if the leakage is very minimal. Once there is no leak, no dressing is required.
- For a more cost-effective solution for ongoing leakage, breast pads are recommended as they are very absorbent and easily obtained from the supermarket or chemist. They can be secured by tape to your child's abdomen or tucked under a tubular bandage. Be vigilant about the skin being wet. Dry the skin and change the pads as often as required.
- Avoid occlusive dressings like Tegaderm and IV3000. If necessary, create a pocket with an absorbent dressing inside, rather than fully enclosing the area. The clinic staff can show you how to do this.
- Protect the surrounding skin with a barrier cream (e.g., Vaseline).
- Eat smaller, more frequent meals for the first 24-48 hours to allow the stoma to close. Larger meals may cause leakage and slow closure.
- In the first 24- 48 hours, limit the amount of liquid your child has in one sitting. Instead, have small, frequent sips. Avoid liquid foods like soups and smoothies, etc.
- The stoma may continue to seep for several days to weeks. This is normal and should not be concerning unless the surrounding skin starts to break down. An acid-suppressing medication may need to be started if this occurs and can be prescribed by the PEG clinic, GP or other medical doctor such as your paediatrician or primary specialist.
- You will not be discharged from the PEG clinic, but a follow-up appointment will not be made. You can book an appointment if the stoma is not closed after 2-3 weeks or if the skin is becoming irritated.

What to avoid after removal of the gastrostomy tube:

- To prevent infection, avoid submersion in stagnant water, such as in a spa, or swimming for at least two weeks post-removal. If swimming is required. Cover the area with an occlusive dressing.
- Try to avoid exercise that puts extra pressure on your child's abdomen for at least a week; no jumping on the trampoline, bending over, no sit-ups, or heavy lifting.
- Clean the area with warm water and a mild wash. Avoid using any harsh soaps or creams.

For concerns post removal, book an appointment with the PEG clinic on 9345 6180