

Gastrostomy tube removal:

Preparation and after care guide



Once it has been determined by your primary treating Dr (often in consultation with your dietician) that your child's gastrostomy tube can be removed (usually 6 months without use of tube) an appointment with the PEG clinic can be made for removal.

Before your appointment:

- Take any medications at least 4 hours before your appointment.
- Have a light meal 3 hours prior to your appointment then nil by mouth 2 hours prior.

After removal of the gastrostomy tube:

- Your child's tract will start to heal and close within hours of removing the feeding tube but it can take more than two weeks to close completely. It will 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 a small percentage of children the stoma does not heal on its own and needs to be surgically closed.
- A dressing will be provided after removal following this you will need to provide your own.
- Change the dressing as often as necessary to keep the wound site dry. Once there is no seeping, no dressing is needed.
- For a more cost effective solution, 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 stomach.
- Protect the surrounding skin with a barrier cream (Vaseline or Phytoplex are good options).
- Smaller meals should be eaten for the first 24-48 hours to allow the stomach to close. Larger meals may stretch the stomach and prevent closure of the wound. We recommend more solid foods, avoiding liquid foods like soups and smoothies etc
- Limit the amount of liquid your child has in one sitting (rather have sips of liquid more often) in the first 24- 48 hours.
- The wound 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.
- An appointment is usually made 2 weeks after removal and then again at 6 weeks, if the stoma has not closed on its own.

What to avoid after removal of the gastrostomy tube:

- To prevent infection, do not bathe child in a bathtub, sit in a Jacuzzi or spa, or swim for at least two weeks post removal.
- Try to avoid exercise that puts extra pressure on your child's stomach for at least a week; no jumping on the trampoline, bending over, no sit-ups or heavy lifting.
- Avoid using any harsh soaps or creams on the area, clean with warm water.

If you have any concerns or questions post removal please contact the PEG clinic on 9345 5673 or via email; peg.nurse@rch.org.au