



## **Nasogastric Tube Position Checks**

A Nasogastric Tube [NGT] is a thin feeding tube inserted through the nose and down the food pipe (oesophagus), into the stomach. Your baby may need a NGT for the delivery of milk or medications.

It is important to check the tube position before putting anything down the tube. This is because the food pipe and the windpipe (trachea) are very close to each other, so there is a risk that the NGT may be placed down the wrong one or the tube may move out of the stomach. The tube may dislodge from coughing, gagging, or vomiting; or if the tape comes loose, or someone pulls on the tube. **Therefore, the position of the NGT is always checked before giving anything down the tube.**

The NGT position is checked by testing the acidity of the fluid that comes from it using pH strips. The stomach is very acidic, so a pH reading **below 5** is safe and use can use the tube.

### **Testing pH to check NGT position**

- Wash your hands before and after handling the NGT.
- Gather and prepare equipment - pH strips, 10 ml oral (purple) syringe.
- Prepare and position your baby so that you can easily check the NGT position.
- Check the tape is secure, and check the number next to your baby's nostril to check the tube hasn't moved.
- Twist open the NGT purple cap, and attach the syringe in a clockwise twisting motion until finger tight.
- Pull back gently until you have about 2.5 ml of fluid, and then return 2 ml (this makes sure the fluid is coming from the stomach, and not just from inside the tube). The 0.5 ml left in the syringe is used for testing.

Sometimes the fluid doesn't come up easily. Your bedside nurse will be able to help you trouble shoot this step.

- Disconnect the syringe by twisting counter-clockwise, and twist close the NGT cap.
- Slowly squirt the fluid from the syringe onto the 3 squares of the pH strip.
- Compare the square colours to the pH strip guide. If the pH reads below 5, the NGT can be used.

Your bedside nurse can give you further education on other pH considerations, such as the effect of medications your baby may be taking.

