Giving Medicine Through an ENFit® Feeding Tube

A step-by-step checklist for patients and caregivers at home

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ADVANCING PATIENT SAFETY

Medicine given the wrong way can **clog the feeding tube, work less effectively, or cause harm.** It has been shown that checklists for giving medicine can reduce error rates by **nearly 95%** in clinical settings. Follow the checklists below to ensure the safe delivery of medicines at home.

1 Check First

- ☐ **1.1** **Keep a current medicine list (see page 3):** name, dose, how often, and that it goes through the tube. Ask your pharmacist to review it for errors.
- ☐ **1.2** **Ask: "Can this go through my tube?"** Some medicines should not be crushed, opened, or given through a feeding tube. Ask your pharmacist if a **liquid** or another form is available.
- ☐ **1.3** **Know your tube.** Stomach (G) or small intestine (J)? With a **GJ-tube**, confirm which port each medicine goes in.
- ☐ **1.4** **Check for medicine allergies** and for possible interactions with other medicines, vitamins, herbals, or over-the-counter products before giving.
- ☐ **1.5** **Something doesn't look right? Stop and ask.** If a label, dose or instruction is confusing or different from last time, call your pharmacist or provider *before* giving it.

2 Prepare Medicine

- ☐ **2.1** **Wash your hands.**
- ☐ **2.2** **Gather supplies:**
  - Liquid medicine bottles and ENFit bottle adapters
  - ENFit medicine syringes: See the **Syringe Size Selection Guide** (scan A)
  - ENFit flushing syringes
  - Pill crusher and one dosing cup per crushed medicine
  - Purified water
- ☐ **2.3** **Measure in mL only:** Never measure in kitchen spoons or other units. For very small doses, use ENFit Low Dose Tip syringes.
- ☐ **2.4** **Prepare each medicine separately,** right before you give it.
  - **Liquid medicines:** See the **Medication Administration At Home** infographic (scan B)
  - **Crushed medicines (see Tablets and Capsules below):** Mix each one in its own dosing cup with purified water. Adults: 15–30 mL. Children or anyone limiting fluids: use the amount your care team instructs.
- ☐ **2.5** **Do not mix medicines together** or combine them with nutrition.

A Syringe Size Selection Guide
https://stayconnected.org/syringe-size-guide

B Medication Administration At Home
https://stayconnected.org/medication-administration-at-home/

Tablets

Do not crush time-released or enteric-coated tablets without consulting your pharmacist. For tablets that can be crushed, pulverize into a **fine powder**, no chunks, then mix with purified water. Avoid inhalation.

Capsules

Only open a capsule if your pharmacist says it's safe to do so. If instructed to open it, mix the contents with purified water as directed in step 2.4 above.

Liquids

Measure the dose in mL.

Tip: Mixing thick or syrupy medicines with a little purified water may help them flow more easily, reduce the chance of clogging, and be easier on your stomach. Ask your pharmacist for guidance.

Before every dose, check the 5 Rights

Medicine	Dose	Person	Tube & port	Time
Is this the right medicine?	Right amount, in mL?	Is it for this person?	Right tube: G or J?	Right time/schedule? Before or after feeding?

3 Administer Medicine

- ☐ **3.1** **Sit the person upright** with their head raised at least 30°.
- ☐ **3.2** **Check the tube.** Make sure it has not moved from its usual position and nothing is leaking.
- ☐ **3.3** **Pause the tube feeding.**
- ☐ **3.4** **Connect an ENFit syringe directly to the feeding tube or extension set and flush with purified water.** Adults: Use at least 15 mL. Children or anyone limiting fluids: use the amount your care team instructs. **Never use unapproved adapters or force fit the connection;** this could result in a drug delivery error.
- ☐ **3.5** **Give the medicine with an ENFit syringe.** If it is a crushed medicine, mix or shake the syringe right before giving it.
- ☐ **3.6** **Give one medicine at a time,** letting it flow or pushing gently. **Flush between each medicine** with purified water, using the same amount as your first flush (3.4), to clear the tube.
- ☐ **3.7** **Flush again** after the last medicine, using the same amount as your first flush (3.4), to clear the tube.
- ☐ **3.8** **Continue feeding as scheduled,** unless you were instructed to wait a specific period of time before resuming the feeding schedule.
- ☐ **3.9** **Clean up.** Clean reusable syringes per the manufacturer's instructions or, if none are given, remove plunger from barrel, wash in warm soapy water, rinse and air-dry unassembled components. Discard single-use syringes.

Never

Never crush time-released, slow-released, extended-release, delayed-release, sustained-release, modified-release, or enteric-coated pills. Avoid crushing pills with:

ER XR XL SR CR DR LA EC MR

Never mix medicines together. They can react with each other or clump and clog the tube.

Never add medicine to the nutrition. The full dose may not get in, and the nutrition can interact with and block the medicine.

Never force medicine through a clogged tube. Don't push hard or poke anything into it. Call your care team.

Stop and call your care team if...

- The tube is clogged and a gentle warm-water flush doesn't clear it
- The tube has moved, is leaking, or the skin around it is red, swollen or draining
- There is coughing, choking, vomiting, or belly pain or swelling after giving medicine
- A medicine doesn't seem to be working, or new side effects appear
- You're not sure whether a medicine tablet can be crushed, capsule opened, or given through the tube
- A new medicine is prescribed: Ask how to give it before the first dose

Helpful tips

Ask for liquid medicines and alternative delivery routes (like a patch). Liquid forms are usually easiest on the tube. Ask your pharmacist if one is available.

J-tubes are different. Medicine skips the stomach, so some work differently or cause cramping. Always ask before giving a new medicine into a J-tube.

Getting medicine from the bottle. Use an ENFit bottle adapter/cap, or a medicine straw, to fill the syringe.

Pick the right syringe size for the dose. Ask your pharmacist which to use, and see the Syringe Size Selection Guide (page 1).

About purified water. This means sterile or distilled water. For tap, bottled, or filtered water, consult your pharmacist.

My feeding tube setup

Fill in with your care team. Bring this page to appointments and update it when medicines change.

Tube type:

☐ G ☐ J ☐ GJ ☐ NG ☐ NJ ☐ Low Profile G

☐ Low Profile GJ ☐ Other: _____

Use (check all that apply):

☐ Feeding ☐ Medicine ☐ Draining ☐ Venting

☐ Other: _____

Placement date: _____

Tube manufacturer: _____

Model #: _____

Length (cm): _____

French size (Fr): _____

My flush amount: _____ mL before / between / after

Water to mix each crushed medicine: _____ mL

Pause feeding for: _____ minutes before / after meds

Pharmacist & phone: _____

Provider / nurse & phone: _____

My medicine chart

Medicine name & strength	**Dose** mL for liquids	**Time(s)**	**Tube/Port** G or J	**How to prepare** liquid / crush / open	**Special instructions** e.g., hold feeding 1 hr

To access this guide, see:

https://stayconnected.org/med-admin-checklist

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This checklist should not replace instructions from your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other medical professionals. If their directions differ, follow theirs.

Developed from published safe-practice guidance, including: (1) American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (ASPEN). *Medications via Enteral Feeding Tubes: A Clinician's Guide*. Practice Tool. 2026. (2) Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP). Preventing errors when preparing and administering medications via enteral feeding tubes. *ISMP Medication Safety Alert! Acute Care*. 2022;27(23):1-4. (3) ISMP. Patient access to appropriately sized oral/enteral medication syringes is needed. *ISMP Medication Safety Alert! Acute Care*. 2026;31(7):1-4. (4) Külekci E, İyigün E. Effectiveness of a checklist for enteral medication administration: a randomized controlled trial. *Nursing in Critical Care*. 2025;30(2):e13275. doi:10.1111/nicc.13275. ENFit is a registered trademark of GEDSA.