

Health and Safety Awareness

Gastrostomy Tubes & Medication Administration

Sometimes individuals, both with and without developmental disabilities, require assistance with getting proper nutrition. A feeding tube is a device that's inserted into your stomach through your abdomen. It's used to supply nutrition when you have trouble eating. Feeding tubes, also known as G-tubes (gastrostomy tubes), can supply medication in addition to nutrition. It is very important to follow all doctor's orders and safety precautions when administering medications through a G-tube.

Five Rights of Medication

The Rights of Medication Administration are continually expanding to ensure safety of all individuals receiving medication. If an individual in your care uses a G-tube to receive medication there are several safety measures to follow. The basic safety guidelines for medication administration include:

Right person- Are you giving the medication to the correct person?

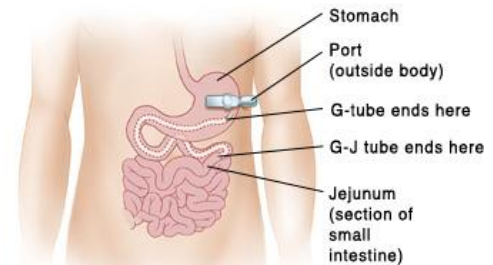
Right Medication- Are you giving the correct medication?

Right dose- Is the dose of medication the correct amount?

Right route- Is the route correct e.g. oral (in the mouth) or through a G-tube?

Right Time- Is it the correct time to give the medication?

In addition, an important safety step is to ensure the pharmacy delivered the correct medication when the medications arrive to the home.



Healthline. (2019). Enteral feedings: how it works and when it's used. Retrieved from <https://www.healthline.com/health/enteral-feeding>

G-Tube Care Tips

- Do not mix medication with formula. Medication should be in liquid form when possible. If not, crush the medication finely and make sure it is well dispersed in water. (Check with the physician to make sure the medication can be safely administered when crushed, if unsure.) *Some medications cannot be crushed.
- Give multiple medications **one at a time** and rinse the tube with warm water before and after. (Again, check with the individual's physician for water flush amounts.)
- You will expect to see some stomach fluid in the syringe when checking (aka pulling back on the syringe). Talk to the individual's physician if you do not see any fluid. This could indicate a problem.

Most importantly, prior to the administration of any medications via G-Tube, providers should ensure staff who are performing these tasks have received adequate training.



Fall Prevention and Awareness

There are many different reasons a person with intellectual and developmental disabilities may fall. The reasons may be related to physical factors or environmental factors.

Physical factors may include: poor vision, neurological disorders, unsteady gait, poor balance and weak muscles, and poor judgement in knowing the difference between safe and dangerous activities.

Environmental factors that can increase the risk for fall may include: slippery floors, loose carpets or unstable rugs, poor lighting, poorly fitting footwear, lack of surfaces to grab, seat heights that are too low, and improper utilization or poor repair of canes, walkers, and wheelchairs.

The goal of preventing falls should focus on minimizing the risk of falls and the risk of injurious falls, while still maintaining individual independence.

The first step in preventing a fall is assessing if the individual is at risk. Do they have a history of falls? Do they have any of the significant physical risk factors? Be sure to do an environmental assessment. Are there objects blocking the individuals pathways? Are all assistive devices (e.g., wheelchair, shower chair, chair lifts, etc.) in proper working order? Does the room have proper lighting?

Awareness of risk is important. Be alert to symptoms of changes in a person's health status and seek guidance from a health professional for any changes.

Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (2017) Preventing falls. Retrieved from <http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/assets/document-library/archive/library/oih/health%20and%20safety%20alerts/preventing%20falls.pdf>

Medication Take Back Event

Chesterfield County Police will be hosting a medication take-back event on

Tuesday, March 5, 2019

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 PM at

Chesterfield County Police
Community Services Building
2730 Hicks Road,
N. Chesterfield, VA 23235.



Please bring unused or expired medications. Sharps will not be accepted.

Contact local authorities and pharmacies in your area to find more locations and dates!

Let's CHAT About Health **CHAT!**

VCU's Partnership for People with Disabilities is currently providing **Let's CHAT About Health**, a health literacy training for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Participants will learn:

- How to better communicate health concerns with doctors, healthcare providers, and supporters.
- How to speak up and ask specific questions about their health.
- Preparing for medical visits and identifying health priorities.

Scheduling

Co-trainers will travel on-site and provide the training sessions free of charge within a two-hour radius of Richmond, Virginia.

To schedule a training or for more information, please contact



Jack Brandt
(804)828-1365
brandtj@vcu.edu