

The Most Common Means of Providing Food and Fluids by Tube

Intravenous Feeding:

How: Needle is inserted into a vein, usually in the hand or forearm, allowing the person to be nourished through the circulatory system.

General use: Generally used to provide fluid maintenance to prevent dehydration or to provide minimal nutrition on a short-term basis. Consists of sugar, salt and water.

Patients who receive this type of feeding:

1. Post-operative patient who cannot have solid food
 2. Patient who is near death
 3. Patients, with a variety of illnesses, who need supplemental fluids on a short-term basis
 4. Patients who need medications such as antibiotics administered intravenously
-

Peripheral Hyper-alimentation:

How: Needle is inserted into a vein, usually in the hand or forearm, allowing the person to be nourished through the circulatory system.

General use: Generally used as a temporary means of providing nutrition. Consists of a liquid nutritional supplement which is not as nutritional as hyper-alimentation (see below) but provides more nutrition than intravenous feeding.

Patients who receive this type of feeding:

1. Patient with a bowel obstruction
 2. Patient suffering from burns
 3. Patient with post-operative complications such as poor wound healing
 4. Patient undergoing repeated operations over a short period of time.
 5. Some cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy
-

Hyper-alimentation:

How: Catheter is surgically placed in a vein in the neck allowing the person to be nourished through the circulatory system. This is complicated surgery which requires close medical supervision.

General use: Generally used to provide long-term nutrition. Consists of a full-liquid nutritional supplement.

Patients who receive this type of feeding:

1. Patient with a bowel obstruction
2. Patient suffering from burns
3. Patient with post-operative complications such as poor wound healing
4. Patient undergoing repeated operations over a short period of time.
5. Some cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy

Nasogastric Tube (Enteral):

How: Soft, plastic, pliable tube is inserted through the nose to reach the stomach allowing the nutrition to enter directly into the digestive system.

General use: Generally used to provide intermediate-term nutrition. Consists of a full-liquid nutritional supplement.

Patients who receive this type of feeding:

1. Patient who is comatose, elderly or on a respirator, or who has an intact bowel but cannot swallow
2. Patient with a neurological (brain) injury which impairs swallowing

Gastrostomy, Jejunostomy, Gastrostomy Button:

How: Tube is surgically inserted through the abdominal wall into the stomach or small intestine allowing the nutrition to enter directly into the digestive system. The tube is installed on an outpatient basis under local anesthetic or through surgery, depending upon the medical situation and need.

General use: Generally used to provide long-term nutrition. Consists of a full-liquid nutritional supplement.

Patients who receive this type of feeding:

1. Patient who cannot swallow due to brain tumor or other neurological disease
2. Patient with cancer of the esophagus or any disease which obstructs swallowing
3. Patient who is comatose and cannot, or will not, swallow.