What do you do if your feeding tube clogs?

Note: These instructions are meant only as a general guide. The information found here should not replace any directions or instructions provided by your doctor. If you have questions, please contact your health care provider.

To avoid clogged feeding tubes:

Flush vigorously using pulsating pressure.

 Always flush the tube immediately before and after feeding with at least 30 mL (1 ounce) of water.
 Never mix medicine with tube feeding unless advised to do so by your healthcare practitioner.
  o Flush tube with at least 30 mL of water before and after all medications.
  o Flush tube with at least 5 mL water between each medication if more than one is given.
 Request liquid versions if available; be aware that some liquid preparations can cause diarrhea due to sorbitol content.
 Crush medicine to a fine powder and disperse in 5 mL of warm water. Always check with your pharmacist first to be sure it is okay to crush a particular medicine.
  o Crush with mortar and pestle (see “Medications for your PEG tube” handout) or other pill crushing device
 Never crush an enteric-coated, time-released, or sustained-release tablet or capsule.
 Never mix fiber supplement with tube feeding formula unless instructed.
 If you are using a fiber supplement, make sure it is approved for use via a tube—some will clog tubes and should not be used. Flush tube with at least 30 mL water before and after fiber supplement administration, if used.

What to do when your tube is Clogged!

 Warm water is usually effective.
  o 60 mL syringe filled with lukewarm water
  o Do not try to force the water in, gently and firmly push and pull the plunger back and forth.
  o Clamp the tube for 20 minutes allowing the water to “soak,” repeat if necessary.

For more information see:


**We advise against using anything else such as carbonated beverages or meat tenderizer to unclog your tube. Clinical studies have not shown them to be effective.