



Newborn Care Series

Feeding with a gastric tube

The baby with a gastric tube will need to be fed every 2 to 3 hours, as often as any baby. Involve the mother in feeding her baby. Caring for her baby helps build the bond of love.

This video will show how to feed the baby with a gastric tube.

First check the chart to determine the amount of milk for each feed. Our 3 day old baby weighs 1.4 kilos. Today he needs 18 ml. of breastmilk every 3 hours.

Have the mother wash her hands and express her milk into a clean cup.

Then show her how to use the syringe to draw it up. Give her positive encouragement as she learns to feed her baby in this new way.

Always check the location of the mark on the tube before each feed. If it has moved, adjust it or replace the tube and recheck the placement.

Then connect the syringe. Remove the plunger and hold the barrel just above the baby. If the milk is not going in, barely insert the plunger and push down slightly, then remove.

The milk will move slowly into the baby's stomach. Each feeding should take about 10 to 15 minutes. When finished, remove the syringe, and cap the tube.

A common mistake is pushing the plunger to speed up the feeding. This can be dangerous. The baby can vomit and possibly breathe milk into the lungs.

Wash the feeding syringe and cup with soap and water for the next use.

Encourage the mother to put the baby to her breast before each feed. This helps babies more quickly develop their feeding skills and improves the mother's milk production. When the baby can effectively breastfeed, remove the tube.

Replace the tube every 3 days or sooner if it becomes blocked or pulled out of place.

Remember:

- Check the chart daily for the volume of breastmilk
- Check placement of the tube before each feed
- Let the milk move slowly into the baby's stomach over 10-15 minutes.