

# Checking nasogastric (NG) tube placement

## What is a nasogastric (NG) tube?

A nasogastric (NG) tube:

- Goes in the nose and then down the back of the throat and esophagus.
- Ends just inside the stomach.
- Is secured in place with a special type of tape or a nasal bridle.

## Why does my child need an NG tube?

Talk with your child's care team about why your child needs an NG tube. An NG tube may be used:

- To provide nutrition and medicines to your child.
- To remove air from the stomach.
- To remove stomach contents.

## How do I check NG tube placement?

It is very important to make sure the tube is in the correct place before using it. You want to be sure the tube is still in the stomach and not in the lungs.

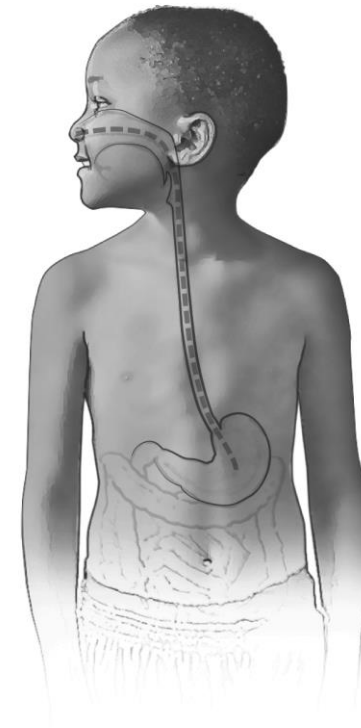
There are different ways to check placement at home, some of which are listed below. Use **two** of these before using the tube. Talk with your child's care team about what is best for your child.

### 1. Check the mark on the tube to make sure it has not moved.

- When the tube is placed, a mark in waterproof pen or marker is added at the point where the tube enters the nose.
- Talk with your child's care team about what to do at home if the mark has moved. You may be taught to call your child's doctor before using the tube, check placement using a different method or replace the tube.

### 2. Pull back a small amount of stomach contents. You may be taught to:

- Look at the color of the contents. They should be clear, grassy green, brown, or milky-colored, or
- If you have been taught to do so, test the pH of the contents. Most often, the pH should be 5 or less. However, there are other factors like medicines and feedings that can increase the pH. Talk with your child's doctor about what pH is best for your child.



**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**

# Checking nasogastric (NG) tube placement, continued

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See page 3 to help guide you when checking tube placement. If you are ever unsure of tube placement, do not use the tube. Call your child's doctor first. Your child may need to see the doctor. There are other ways the care team can check placement if needed.

Watch your child's breathing for several minutes once you start using the tube. Your child should keep breathing normally. He should not have coughing, changes in how hard he breathes, skin color changes or congestion. If this happens, stop using the tube **right away**. You may be taught to call your child's doctor or take your child to the emergency department (ED) to have the tube replaced or to replace the tube as advised.

## When should I call the doctor?

Call your child's doctor if you notice:

- Nausea, vomiting (throwing up) or extra gas
- Hard stool or no stool for 2 to 3 days
- Stomach pain
- Stomach is hard, bloated or swollen
- Fussiness during feeds

If you have not been taught to replace the tube, call your child's doctor if the tube:

- Does not seem to be in the correct place.
- Comes out and you have not been taught to replace it.
- Cracks or tears.

## When should I get emergency help?

Call 911 **right away** if your child has signs of breathing trouble. This may include:

- Coughing, choking, wheezing or grunting
- Chest retractions (pulling in of the skin around the ribs and chest when breathing)
- A blue or dark purple color around the nails, lips, mouth, tongue or gums

If the tube comes out and you were not taught to replace it:

- Call your child's doctor or take your child to the emergency department (ED) to have it replaced.
- Most often, this is not a medical emergency. Still, your child needs the tube replaced as soon as possible in order to get medicines and feedings.

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**

# Checking nasogastric (NG) tube placement, continued

## To check (confirm) placement:

1. Check the mark on the tube to make sure it has not moved.
2. Pull back a small amount of stomach contents using a syringe attached to the end of the tube. Look at the color of the contents. They should be clear, grassy green, brown, or milky-colored.
3. Test the pH of the contents if you have been taught to do so.

**OK:** the tube marking has not changed, **and** you pulled back stomach contents.

**You may use the tube**

**OK:** the tube marking has not changed, **and** you pulled back stomach contents, **and** you have been taught to test pH and the result is 5 or less.

**You may use the tube**

**Not OK:** the tube marking has changed, **or** you did not pull back stomach contents, **or** you have been taught to test pH and the result is more than 5.

## **Do not use the tube**

Remove it. Then:

- Place a new tube if you have been taught to do so and confirm placement, **or**
- Call your child's doctor or take your child to the emergency department (ED) to have it replaced.

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.