

Use and Care of the AMT GJ-Tube

Who to call for tube-related questions

Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30

p.m.: Call the Gastroenterology Department at 617-355-6058.

Weeknights from 4:30 p.m.–

8 a.m., weekends and

holidays: Call the Page Operator at 617-355-6000 and ask to speak with the GI doctor.

Who to call for tube-related emergencies

Do one of the following as soon as possible:

- **Monday–Friday, 7:30 a.m.–4 p.m.:** Call Interventional Radiology at 617-355-6579
- **After 4 p.m. and before 7:30 a.m.:** Go to Boston Children's Hospital Emergency Room or call your attending physician.
- **Weekends and holidays, 7:30 a.m.–4 p.m.:** Call 617-355-6000 and ask for the interventional radiologist on-call to be paged.

When to call the doctor

Call if:

- The skin around the tube is red, swollen, warm, sore or bleeding
- The tube seems too tight or too loose
- There is a bad smell or fluid is leaking from around the tube
- Your child is vomiting (throwing up) when using the tube
- You think that the tube may have moved out of place
- The tube is clogged and you can't unclog it
- You are having a problem with the balloon

What does a GJ-tube do?

A gastrojejunal (GJ) tube is placed through your child's stomach and into the small intestine (called the jejunum). It is used:

- To get air or fluids out of the stomach
- To give feeds or medicine when your child is unable to tolerate them by mouth or in the stomach

What does the GJ-tube look like?

A water-filled balloon placed inside the stomach holds the GJ-tube in place.

Figure 1 shows where to find the size and jejunal length on the GJ-tube.

- Size: _____ fr _____ cm
- _____ cm jejunal length
- Volume of water in balloon: _____ mL

Figure 1 shows the 3 access ports (openings) to the GJ-tube.

- One port goes to the **stomach** (called the G-tube port).
- One port goes to the **jejunum** (called the J-tube port).
- One port goes to the **balloon** (called the balloon port).

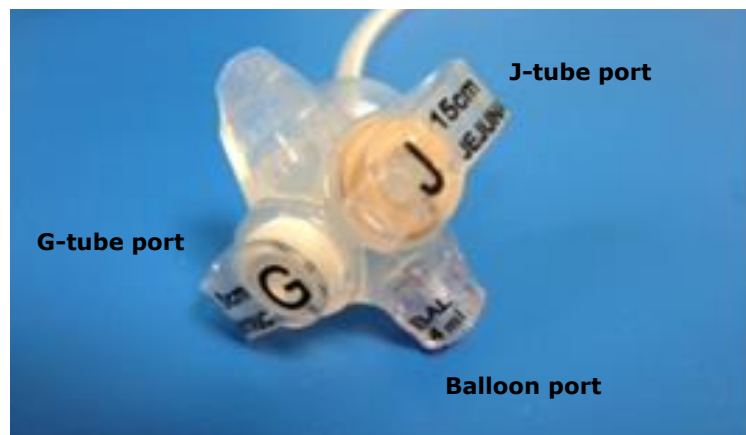


Figure 1

What supplies will I need to care for the tube?

- 5–10 mL slip tip syringe
- 30–60 mL catheter tip syringe
- Bottled water (for filling the balloon)
- Cotton tip applicators (for cleaning the tube area)
- Gastric extension set and jejunal extension set
- Soap, water and gauze
- Tape (for keeping the tube secured in place)

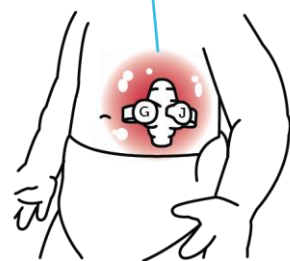
Important: Do not rotate (turn) the GJ-tube because it can cause it to move out of place.

How do I care for my child's GJ-tube?

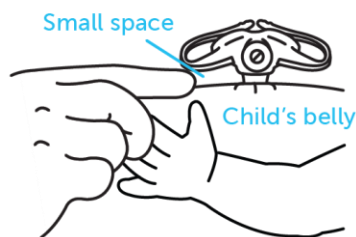
How to care for the skin around the GJ-tube:



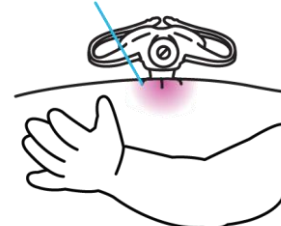
Area of redness or infection



Small space



Slightly pink skin around tube is normal



1 Wash the skin around and under the GJ-tube each day with soap and water. Gently pat dry. **Your child can take baths 1 week after surgery.**

2 Look for signs of redness and infection while you are cleaning the skin.

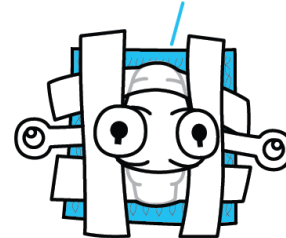
3 Make sure the GJ-tube rests lightly on the belly. There should be a thin (dime-size) space between the tube and the belly.

4 The area around the GJ-tube may be a little pink. This is normal.

How to put on dressing (if needed):

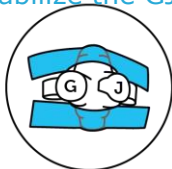
- Use a gauze pad or absorbent dressing around the GJ-tube if there is fluid leaking out and irritating the skin.
- If a dressing is needed:
 - Place the dressing under the GJ-tube before taping it in place.
 - Use a long piece of tape that covers the tube **and** the dressing when you tape the tube to the skin.
 - Change the dressing every day or more often if it gets wet.

Dressing

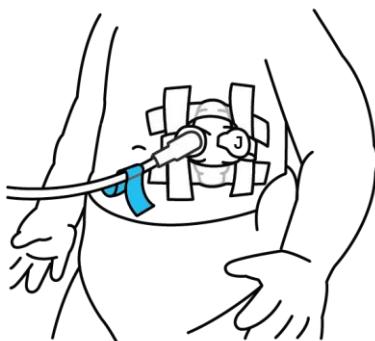
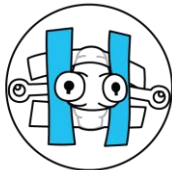


How to stabilize the GJ-tube:

First



Second



1 Put tape over the GJ-tube and onto the skin in a tic-tac-toe pattern.

Tip: Open the caps before taping. This keeps the tape from getting in the way.

2 Use a piece of tape or Grip-Lok to stick each extension set to the belly so that they are not hanging.

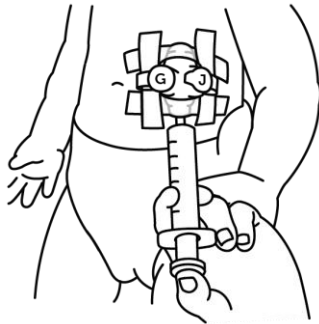
Remember: Take the extension sets off when not in use.

Important things to know:

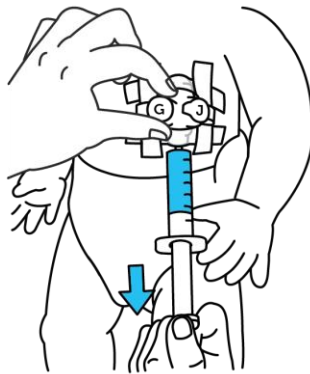
- **Tape the GJ-tube tightly to the belly at all times.**
- Try not to move the GJ-tube around too much because:
 - The opening may become stretched. Stomach juices can leak out and irritate the skin.
 - The tube could be caught on something and get pulled out.

How do I care for my child's GJ-tube?

How to check the balloon:



- 1 Make sure that the GJ-tube is taped tightly to the belly.
- 2 Attach a 5–10 mL slip tip syringe to the balloon port on the tube.



- 3 Hold the GJ-tube in place with one hand and gently pull back on the syringe with the other hand to take out the water from the balloon.

- 4 Check to make sure your child's balloon has the prescribed amount of water in it.
 - **If the amount is correct:** Push the water back into the balloon. Keep your thumb pressed on the end of the syringe and gently pull the syringe tip out of the balloon port.
 - **If there is less water than there should be in the balloon:** Use the syringe to add more water until you reach the prescribed amount.
 - **If you cannot get the water out of the balloon:** Take the syringe off and make sure nothing is clogging the port. Try taking the water out of the balloon again. If you still cannot get the water out call your child's doctor or nurse.

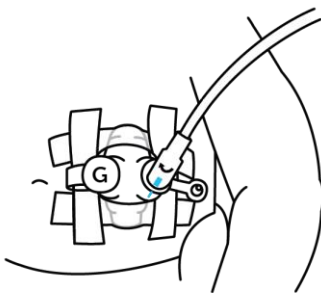
Important things to know:

- If there is not enough water in the balloon:
 - Fluid could leak from the tube site
 - The tube could come out

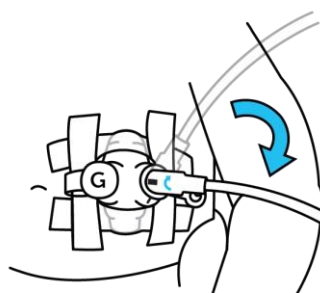
Check the amount of water in the balloon weekly. Start checking 1 week after surgery (unless you are told differently).

- Only use bottled water to fill the balloon. **Never fill the balloon with air or saline.**
- If water in the balloon is not clear, replace it with new water.
- There may be a problem with the balloon if there is less water in it than prescribed, or if the water is discolored. Call your child's doctor or nurse if this is happening.

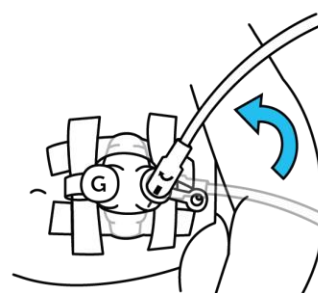
How to put on and take off extension sets:



- 1 **To put on:** Open the cap. Line up the black mark on the extension set with the black mark on the tube. Gently press the extension set into place (you will feel it click).



- 2 Turn the extension in the direction of the arrow to lock it in place.



- 3 **To take off:** Turn the extension set in the opposite direction (reverse) of the arrow and line up the black marks again. Gently pull up on the extension set to take it out. Close the cap.

Important things to know:

- Extension sets are color-coded. Each set connects to only one port on the GJ-tube.
- Clean the extension sets with soap and water after use. Rinse well and let them air dry.
- Replace extension sets weekly.
- Take extension sets off when not in use.

What should I do if my child's GJ-tube falls out?

- The GJ-tube has to be put back in by an interventional radiologist using an X-ray procedure.
- Follow the instructions given to you by your attending physician on how to maintain the stoma if the GJ-tube comes out. After that, do one of the following right away:
 - **Monday–Friday, 7:30 a.m.–4 p.m.:** Call Interventional Radiology at 617-355-6579
 - **After 4 p.m. and before 7:30 a.m.:** Go to Boston Children's Hospital Emergency Room or call your attending physician. We will contact the interventional radiologist at 7:30 a.m.
 - **Weekends and holidays, 7:30 a.m.–4 p.m.:** Call 617-355-6000 and ask for the interventional radiologist on-call to be paged.

Flushing the GJ-tube

Check with your doctor if your child is on a fluid restriction.

When to flush the J-tube port

- Flush the J-tube port of your child's GJ-tube with water every **4 hours**, even if your child is getting around-the-clock feedings.
- Flush the J-tube port of your child's GJ-tube with the prescribed amount of water **before and after giving formula or medicines**. This helps to prevent the tube from clogging because some medicines and formulas should not be mixed together.

When to flush the G-tube port

- Flush the G-tube port of your child's GJ-tube **before and after medicines**, and at least **once per day** if it's not being used.

What should I do if my child's GJ-tube is clogged?

- Try to clear the tube by flushing it with 10 mL of warm water. Use a "pulsing" (start/stop) motion to flush.
- Call your child's doctor or nurse if you cannot unclog the tube.
- **Never** try to push anything into the tube to unclog it. Things like soda or juice can make the clog worse.

Important tips

Regular tube replacement

- GJ-tubes need to be regularly replaced by Interventional Radiology. Please call 617-355-6579 to set up your appointments.

Tube supplies

- Your medical team will work with a case manager at Boston Children's. This case manager will have a home care company set up to send supplies to your home.
- Contact your home care company when you are getting low on supplies, before you run out.
- Contact your home care company if you are having trouble with your feeding pump.

Visiting nurses

- A case manager at Boston Children's will offer to set you up with a visiting nurse agency (VNA) to help you as you go home from the hospital.

This Family Education sheet is available in Arabic and Spanish