

Gastrostomy Tube (G-tube)

A gastrostomy tube (also called a G-tube) is a tube inserted through the abdomen that delivers nutrition directly to the stomach. Some children have medical problems that prevent them from adequately taking nutrients by mouth such as breast feeding, bottles, eating or drinking. This is a medical procedure that doctors perform to make sure that children are able to get the nutrients that is needed to thrive.

Here a list of some common conditions that might require a child to need a G-tube:

1. Sucking and swallowing disorders, which are often related to prematurity
2. Abnormalities of the mouth, esophagus, stomach or intestines
3. Developmental delays
4. Failure to thrive
5. Failure to gain weight and grow appropriately
6. Certain neuromuscular conditions
7. Cerebral palsy

A child will have the Gastrostomy tube placed by one of three ways

1. PEG-percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) through the skin. This is the most common technique, uses an endoscope which is a thin flexible tube with a small camera and light at the tip.

2. Laparoscopic Technique is done by making several small incisions into the abdomen and inserting a telescope to make the stomach visible to the surgeon. This technique can also be used with the PEG approach as well as other abdominal surgeries performed at the same time.

3. Open Surgery is a good technique if the child's anatomy will not allow for a PEG, also if there's additional abdominal surgeries or procedures needed this may be a good time to move forward with it.

After surgery the site will be monitored and able to begin feeding. The child's family will be trained on how to use the G-tube, care for it and what to look out for. Upon going home a nurse will schedule a visit to come to the house to make sure that the feeding is going well and assist with concerns.