

700 Children's Drive
Columbus, Ohio 43205-2696
nationwidechildrens.org

GASTROSTOMY BUTTON: DAILY CARE

Your doctor has placed a small feeding device into your child's stomach. It is called a gastrostomy button or skin-level device. It is used as a connection between the stomach and the skin so your child can be fed liquid feedings.

Gastrostomy brand _____

Gastrostomy button size _____

Gastrostomy button length _____

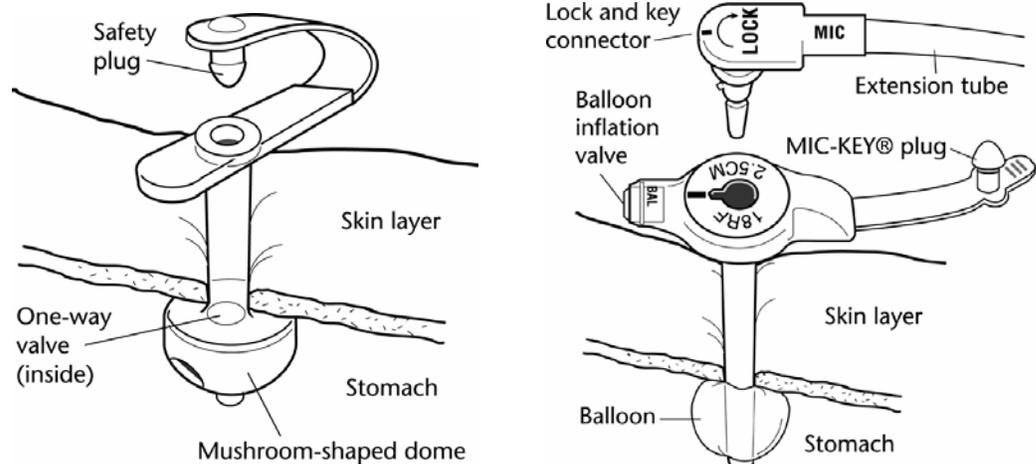
There are several kinds of gastrostomy buttons (Picture 1). Your doctor or nurse will tell you what kind your child is wearing. The different brands do not look alike but they work in the same way. Some have "wings" on top of the skin. Others look like a small disk or mushroom. Some have a small balloon that is inflated under the skin and rests against the stomach wall. The gastrostomy button has two holes in it to allow tube feedings to go into the stomach. A valve inside the gastrostomy button keeps stomach contents from leaking out when the plug is opened.

YOU WILL NEED

- Continuous feeding tube (size _____)
- Bolus feeding tube (size _____)
- Decompression tube (size _____)
- Syringe (size _____)
- Cotton-tipped swabs
- Mild hand soap (for cleaning child's skin)
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Liquid dish soap (for cleaning feeding tubes)
- White vinegar
- Water
- 3 Foley catheters (same size as button, one size larger, and one size smaller)
- Lubricant (such as K-Y Jelly®)

THE GASTROSTOMY BUTTON DRESSING

The doctor or nurse may put a dressing around your child's gastrostomy button the first time it is put in. The dressing protects your child's skin from any drainage that might occur. Most children do not need a dressing around the button after the first 2 days. If drainage lasts longer than 2 days, call your child's doctor.



Picture 1 Two types of gastrostomy buttons (not actual size).

CARE OF THE SKIN AROUND THE GASTROSTOMY BUTTON

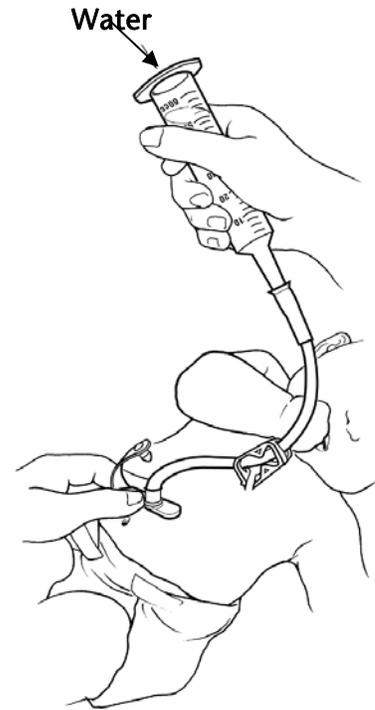
1. The skin around the button should be cleaned twice a day. Clean the skin 3 times a day if the gastrostomy button site becomes red or if drainage occurs.
2. Turn the button in a quarter circle at least twice a day. This will keep the skin under it from becoming sore.
3. It is safe to put a child with a gastrostomy button in the bathtub. Be sure the plug is closed. The plug will keep bath water from going into the stomach.

How to Clean the Skin around the Gastrostomy Button

1. Clean the skin around the button with a cotton swab dipped in soapy water. If there is drainage around the button, clean it with a mixture of half hydrogen peroxide and half water.
2. Be sure to **turn the button in a full circle** to clean all the skin covered by the button.
3. Rinse and dry the skin well.

HOW TO CLEAN THE GASTROSTOMY BUTTON

1. Using a syringe, flush the button with at least 4 teaspoons (20 to 30 mL.) of water after every feeding and after giving medicines (Picture 2). This will help keep the inside of the button from getting coated with formula or pieces of food.
2. Once a day, clean inside the opening of the gastrostomy button and the button plug with a cotton swab dipped in warm water. **Do not push against the one-way valve.**
3. Be sure to close the gastrostomy button with the plug after you have cleaned it.



Picture 2 Using a syringe and feeding tube, flush the gastrostomy button with water after feedings and after giving medicine.

CARE OF THE GASTROSTOMY BUTTON FEEDING TUBES

- Each button comes with 2 feeding tubes: One is a **bolus** tube and the other is a **continuous** feeding tube. The continuous feeding tube has a special flat adapter on the end.
- The feeding tubes may be used for several weeks, as long as they are cleaned and continue to work.

HOW TO CLEAN THE FEEDING TUBES

1. Rinse the feeding tubes with plain water after every feeding. Use the syringe to push water through the tube.
2. Once a day, wash the feeding tubes in warm, soapy water (Picture 3).
3. Rinse the tubes well with clean water and dry.
4. Once a week, soak the feeding tubes in full strength vinegar for about 20 minutes to help remove dried formula or food. Rinse the tubes well with plain water before using again.



Picture 3 Cleaning the feeding tubes.

STOMACH DECOMPRESSION

Sometimes children who receive tube feedings have discomfort from a build-up of gas in the stomach. A tube is used to release gas and to drain stomach contents when this happens. This is called *stomach decompression*.

- Stomach decompression should be done only when your child shows signs of discomfort such as a hard or swollen stomach, continuous crying, or vomiting.
- Some decompression tubes have a special adapter on the end that fits into the button and holds the one-way valve open. When the valve is open, the gas or stomach contents flow up the adapter and out through the decompression tube.
- **For the MIC-KEY® gastrostomy device:** Either the bolus tube or the continuous feeding tube may be used for stomach decompression.
- **For the Bard® button:** The Bard® gastrostomy button has a special tube called a decompression tube. **Never use the decompression tube as a feeding tube. Leaving the decompression tube in too long can ruin the one-way valve.**

HOW TO USE THE DECOMPRESSION TUBE

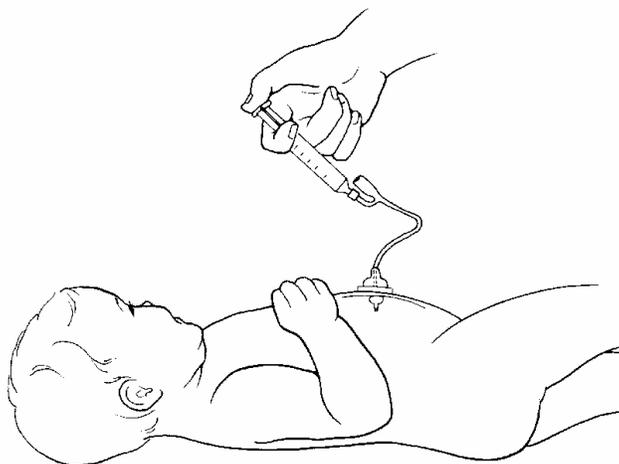
1. Open the plug on the gastrostomy button.
2. Put the decompression tube into the button and open the clamp.
3. Let the stomach contents and gas flow out of the tube into a container.
4. **Remove the decompression tube as soon as the gas or stomach contents are released.**
5. Clean the decompression tube the same way you clean the feeding tubes.

IF THE GASTROSTOMY BUTTON COMES OUT

- If the gastrostomy button comes out accidentally, save it and bring the button with your child to the doctor as soon as possible to have it put back in.
- **Very important:** You will need to place a Foley catheter into the gastrostomy button hole to keep it open until you can have the button put back in.
- If you are unable to insert a Foley catheter in the opening, call your surgeon's office or local emergency room. The opening should have a catheter of a similar or smaller size placed within **4 hours or less** to prevent the opening from sealing closed.
- Supplies you will need at home: Foley catheters (the same size as the button, one size larger, and one size smaller), a syringe, and a lubricant such as K-Y Jelly.

HOW TO PUT IN A FOLEY CATHETER

1. Fill the syringe with _____ mL. of fresh water.
2. Test the Foley catheter balloon by adding 3 to 4 mL. of water and then checking for leaks. Pull back on the plunger of the syringe to remove the water from the balloon.
3. Use a lubricant such as K-Y Jelly® on the tip of the Foley catheter.
4. Put the Foley catheter into the stomach opening.
5. Attach the syringe to the tube and inject _____ mL. of water into the closed end of the Foley catheter to blow up the balloon (Picture 4). (The balloon keeps the tube from coming out of the stomach.)
6. Gently pull on the Foley catheter to make sure it is securely in place. (The tube should fit snugly but not be tight in the stoma opening).
7. Clamp the Foley catheter.
8. Tape the end of the Foley catheter to the child's stomach.



Picture 4 Inject water into the balloon of the new Foley catheter.

WHEN TO CALL THE DOCTOR

Call your doctor (phone)_____ or the clinic (phone)_____:

- If you notice bleeding, tissue growth, or leakage around the gastrostomy button.
- If you notice signs of infection (redness, swelling, foul odor, or increased drainage) around the gastrostomy button.
- If your child is often uncomfortable after feedings or if you must use the decompression tube after every meal.
- If your child is gaining weight rapidly and the button is becoming very snug against the skin.
- If the gastrostomy button comes out.

OTHER INFORMATION

Your child's gastrostomy button should not leak. If you notice leakage from inside the button when you open the plug, it may mean the one-way valve is sticking or broken. Call the clinic or your child's doctor for advice.

If you have any questions about your child's gastrostomy button, be sure to ask your doctor or nurse, or call _____.