Jejunostomy Tube Care

On ____/____/____ your child had a ____________________ jejunostomy tube placed by ____________________ in the ____________________ department.

This was because your child’s medical treatment plan includes using a jejunostomy tube for nutrition and/or medications. Children who go without nutrition for a long time can have serious problems, especially if they have metabolic disorders. The tube bypasses the stomach and is placed in the second part of the small intestine. It is important to know how the jejunum works so that you can understand what to watch for when feeding your child. It is also important to prevent complications with the jejunostomy tube so it does not need to be replaced frequently. This care card will tell you what you need to know to use the jejunostomy tube correctly.

Jejunum:

The second part of the small intestine is called the jejunum. It is several feet long in older children and adults. The jejunum digests and absorbs nutrients from liquid food it receives from the stomach and duodenum (first part of the small intestine). Large amounts of fluid or food at one time in the jejunum can cause diarrhea. The jejunum cannot stretch and hold onto liquid food until digestion is complete. This is why a feeding pump is necessary for your child to get a set amount of formula per hour. Also, very concentrated fluids, such as liquid medicines, need to be diluted so that the medicine does not irritate the jejunum and cause diarrhea.

Jejunostomy Tube:

Your child’s jejunostomy tube may go through the nose and stomach and into the small intestine or it may go through an opening in the abdomen. In both cases, it is VERY important that the tube not be pulled out of place. Please make every effort to make sure the tube is secure with tape (if appropriate) and that your child cannot easily get at the tube. This is especially important for children who are too young or unable to understand that the tube must not be disturbed.

Gastro-Jejunostomy Tube:

Your child’s feeding tube may have an opening into his stomach and jejunum. This type of tube is called a gastro-jejunostomy. It is important to find out from your child’s Primary Care Provider (PCP, who normally treats your child) where medicines are to be given. Some medicines may be put down the gastric port (opening into the stomach). It is also very important to make sure that the feeding pump tubing does not get connected to the gastric port. When giving medicines, it is important to flush before and after with water regardless of whether the medicines go into the stomach or jejunum. There is a third port for the balloon that keeps the tube in your child’s stomach. Please do not try to put any fluid or medicine down that port.

TUBE CARE:

Since this tube can be difficult to replace, it is important that it not become clogged. A clogged jejunostomy tube usually takes a long time to get open and may have to be replaced by the doctor. Your child may miss several hours of nutrition, fluids or medicines. Prevention of a clogged jejunostomy tube is very important.
The following procedures should help keep the tube open:

- Flush the jejunostomy tube at least 4 times per day with at least 10 ml of tap water.
- If the tube becomes hard to flush, put 1-2 ounces of cola down the tube. Cola acts as a mild acid that will clean the tube.
- If the tube often becomes hard to flush, use cola at least once a day to prevent clogging.

The following procedures should help avoid diarrhea:

- Do not give more than 4-5 ounces of fluid at any one time.
- When giving a medicine, flush before and after the medicine with at least 10 ml of tap water.
- It is best to dilute medicines with ____________ of water.

Other Suggestions:

- Clean the skin around an abdominal jejunostomy tube with soap and water every day. If the skin becomes red, stop using soap. Clean the skin with water only. If any drainage, pain, or swelling is present, call your PCP or the doctor/department who placed the tube.
- It is a good idea to put the pump backpack in a small shopping cart or doll carriage for toddlers who are on 24 hour feedings.

Possible Problems:

As with any medical therapy, problems can occur that may or may not be associated with the therapy. The following problems can affect jejunostomy tube functioning or the health of your child.

- **Diarrhea and/or Cramping:** Call your child’s primary care provider if diarrhea last longer than 24 hours or for any vomiting. To help prevent diarrhea, cramping or vomiting:
  - Make sure the pump rate is correct.
  - Dilute all medicines with water before putting down the tube.
  - Make sure the formula and medicines are at room temperature.
  - Use only very clean supplies and formula that has been prepared within the last 24 hours.

- **Clogged Tubing:** Call the Children’s Mercy Information Line at (816) 234-3188 if the tube becomes clogged.

- **Dislodged or Misplaced Gastro-Jejunostomy Tube:** Replace the tube into the opening. Tape the tube in place. **DO NOT USE THE REPLACED TUBE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.** Call the department that placed the tube at 8 am to schedule a replacement. (Radiology department phone number is (816) 234-3270)

Special Instructions:

For further assistance, call: