

## Tip Sheets

### Gastrostomy Tubes



When a child has issues with the mouth, throat, stomach or intestines due to a medical problem or disability and is unable to be fed orally, he may receive a gastrostomy or gastric tube.

Gastric tubes, often referred to as “g-tubes,” are a feeding tube that is inserted directly into the stomach so that the child can receive liquid nutrients, and when necessary, medications. One end of the tube is placed directly into the stomach and the other end is outside of the body. It is held in place either by a type of balloon or stitches.

#### Types of Gastric Tubes

The most common type of g-tube is called a button tube and looks somewhat like the part of an inflatable toy which you blow into to fill the toy with air. A tube and/or syringe is inserted into the opening in order to feed the child. Once inserted, liquid nutrients or formula is delivered directly to the child’s stomach through the tube/syringe.

Some children may have a small pump-like device that provides a slow and continuous flow of nutrients into the stomach. Although there may be some anxiety initially, with the necessary information and training, children with g-tubes can be successfully included in the early care and education environment.

#### G-Tubes and Childcare

When a child with a g-tube enters a program, it is important for early care and education

professionals to gain an understanding of the reason—such as a medical or health issue—for the gastric tube. A special health care plan should be developed with the primary health care provider, parents, program staff, and a health care consultant (if available). The health care plan should include:

- Specific instructions on how to feed the child through the g-tube.
- When, how often, and the amounts that the child should be fed.
- Instructions as to whether or not there should be any work on oral feeding.
- Care of the g-tube.
- What to do and who to contact if complications arise such as dislodging of the tube.
- Where to receive and who can provide training.

#### Additional Resources

California Childcare Health Program | G-Tubes in Child Care

<https://cchp.ucsf.edu/content/g-tubes-child-care>

For more information, visit [www.inclusivechildcare.org](http://www.inclusivechildcare.org).

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