

Enteral Feeding Tips

Enteral Feeding Basics

Children's Wisconsin patients on enteral feedings have a dietitian. If your patient is having problems tolerating their tube feeding or you have other questions or concerns about their enteral nutrition, contact their dietitian. If you are unsure how to contact their dietitian, contact their specialty physician or clinic.

Initiating Enteral Feeds

- Start with full strength formula
- Don't start with goal feeds
 - Start with $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$ of goal volume
 - Provide family with steps for increasing to goal
- Start with a standard formula unless the patient has food allergies or other contraindications
 - Infants: Enfamil NeuroPro Infant (milk-based formula) or equivalent
 - Children: PediaSure Grow & Gain or equivalent
 - Older children (14+ years old): Osmolite or equivalent
 - Consider a flavored product if also taking orally

Adjusting Enteral Feeds

The best indicator of a patient's calorie needs is weight gain on current feeding plan. If your patient is gaining or losing weight too quickly:

- Increase or decrease feeding volume by 5-10% based on weight gain

Important Considerations

Tube fed infants require periodic volume increases for continued growth. Follow these general guidelines for advancing enteral feedings for infants (up to 12 months corrected age):

- 0-3 months old: increase total volume by 1 ounce every week
- 3-6 months: increase total volume by 1 ounce every other week
- 6-9 months: increase total volume by 1 ounce every 3 weeks
- 9-12 months: increase total volume by 1 ounce every month

Patients are likely meeting their micronutrient needs if they are receiving the following volumes of 1.0 calorie/ml formula:

- 1-8 years: 4 cans or 32 ounces pediatric formula
- 9-13 years: 6 cans or 48 ounces pediatric formula
- 13+ years: 6 cans or 48 ounces adult formula

If a patient has low calorie needs and is receiving less than the required amount of formula to meet their micronutrient needs, consider:

- Consulting their dietitian
- Changing to a reduced calorie formula (PediaSure Reduced Calorie or Compleat Pediatric Original Reduced Calorie)
- Adding a children's complete chewable multivitamin (Flintstones Complete)
- Obtaining nutrition labs in consult with a dietitian