

Name of Child: _____ Date: _____

Feeding Your Child After Surgery

Food gives your child the energy and nutrients to heal and grow. Nutrition is very important while your child is recovering from surgery. They need extra energy to heal after surgery and to catch up on weight gain. The usual way to feed a child is by eating. But sometimes after surgery, eating is not easy.

NG tube:

Children with breathing tubes can't swallow food or liquid. The breathing tube is in the way. Children with breathing tubes can be fed through a tube called an **NG tube** or **nasogastric tube**. This tube slides through the nose or mouth into the stomach. No cuts or pokes are needed, and it does not leave a scar. Liquid food, formula, breastmilk, and some medicine can be given through this tube.

To be sure your child is getting enough calories to grow and heal after surgery, the NG tube may still be used after the breathing tube is no longer needed. If your child will go home with the NG tube, you will learn how to feed your child through the NG tube before you take your child home.

Nutrition by IV:

Sometimes a child's stomach is not ready for food, or the child cannot get enough calories through eating or an NG tube. Then, nutrition can be given through an IV tube, into a vein. The form of the food is called **TPN (total parenteral nutrition)** and **intralipids** or **lipids** (fats that the child needs to grow). When your child is able to get enough nutrition by mouth or feeding tube, IV nutrition can be stopped.

Trouble feeding:

Many things can make it hard for a baby to get enough food. Feeding may be too much work. Feeding may use up too many calories or make them too tired to eat. When this happens, they may feed for a short time, then get the rest of their nutrition through a feeding tube.

Some babies may need special formula or a formula with more calories to grow well. If your child needs a special formula, we will teach you how to mix it.

Some babies cough, choke, and gag when they feed. They have trouble coordinating their suck, swallow, and breathing. A speech therapist can work with you and your child to learn this.

Breastmilk:

It can be hard to breastfeed and pump when your baby is sick. We will help you. Ask your nurse to show you where the pump and supplies are kept. Pump the same number of times every day you would have breastfed. For a newborn you should pump 8 to 10 times each day. Pump every 4 to 6 hours, even during the night.

Label the breastmilk with your baby's name, date, and time, and give it to your nurse to put in the refrigerator or freezer. If you have any questions, concerns, or trouble with breastfeeding or pumping, tell your nurse. Your nurse can call a lactation specialist to help you.

Now that you've read this:

- Tell your nurse or doctor how your child will get enough food after surgery.
(Check when done.)

If you want to learn more, ask your nurse for these handouts:

- How to Store Breast Milk #339
- How to Feed Your Child Through a Nasogastric (NG) Tube #62



If you have any questions or concerns,

- call your child's doctor or call _____

If you want to know more about child health and illness,
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016
602-933-1400
866-933-6459
www.phoenixchildrens.org
www.theemilycenter.org
Facebook: [facebook.com/theemilycenter](https://www.facebook.com/theemilycenter)
Twitter: @emilycenter

Disclaimer

The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children's Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.

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#920 • Written by Michele Osborn, RN • Illustrated by Irene Takamizu

Feeding Your Child After Surgery

Name of Health Care Provider: _____

Date returned: _____ db

Family Review of Handout

Health care providers: Please teach families with this handout.

Families: Please let us know what you think of this handout.

Would you say this handout is hard to read? Yes No

easy to read? Yes No

Please circle the parts of the handout that were hard to understand.

Would you say this handout is interesting to read? Yes No

Why or why not?

Would you do anything differently after reading
this handout? Yes No

If yes, what?

After reading this handout, do you have any
questions about the subject? Yes No

If yes, what?

Is there anything you don't like about the drawings?

Yes

No

If yes, what?

What changes would you make in this handout to make it better or easier to understand?

Please return your review of this handout to your nurse or doctor or send it to the address below.

The Emily Center
Health Education Specialist
Phoenix Children's Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016-7710

602-933-1395

Thank you for helping us!