

ONCOLOGY NUTRITION

To Unclog a Feeding Tube

1. Measure $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon (2 mL) of baking soda (sodium bicarbonate), note if using sodium bicarbonate tablets it needs to be crushed prior to measuring for use. Use a $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon (2 mL) size measure rather than a spoon used for eating. Level the teaspoon by using a knife to scrape off any overflow – do not overfill. See picture below.

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon (2 mL)



Leveling the $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon



2. Dissolve the baking soda in 15 mL warm (not hot) tap water.
3. Open one pancrelipase capsule (COTAZYM 8 (10,800 lipase units)) and empty contents in 15 mL warm tap water.
4. Draw up both baking soda and pancrelipase solutions into one small syringe (use a 30mL Catheter tip syringe or Luer Lock syringe/adapter combination).
5. Attach an empty syringe to the feeding tube; then draw back on plunger of syringe to decompress all air and fluid from the feeding tube. Pinch off the tube with your fingers, and discard syringe.
6. Attach syringe with baking soda and pancrelipase to feeding tube; push plunger in to add the mixture into feeding tube.
7. Clamp the tube (or leave syringe attached to the end of feeding tube); wait 30 minutes.
8. After 30 minutes, flush the tube with 30 mL of tap water.
9. Repeat once if necessary.
10. If the blockage does not clear, and other causes of blockage (e.g. kinked tube) have been ruled out, contact your physician or go to the nearest emergency room to have the tube replaced.

This information is not meant to replace the medical counsel of your doctor or individual consultation with a registered dietitian. This information may only be used in its entirety. Authorization given to reproduce this information with acknowledgement to Oncology Nutrition, BC Cancer Agency

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Options for obtaining these supplies:

1. If you are using Lancaster Medical for your pharmacy needs and you need a new prescription for items to unblock your tube, your Healthcare Provider should prescribe: "G-tube maintenance kit with COTAZYME", or
2. Alternatively, if you use another pharmacy, your Healthcare Provider should prescribe "3 x COTAZYME 8 (10,800 lipase units)" with repeats as necessary. In addition to this prescription, you will need ½ teaspoon (2 mL) of sodium bicarbonate (or use baking soda from your pantry), a 30mL Luer Lock syringe, a Catheter Tip adapter, a mixing cup (from home is fine), and the above full directions for usage.

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