

## **NASOGASTRIC TUBE FEEDING**

We thought it could be useful to peer support volunteers to know a little more about this method of feeding. You may come across mums in various settings and in your groups who may have had to feed their baby this way and it is worth reflecting on how they might feel/have felt about their time on the NNU and their feeding journey when you sit alongside them to support with breastfeeding/giving of breastmilk.

*Below is the information given to parents about n/g tube feeding at RCHT Treliske, Truro, Cornwall. Some of the information given may differ very slightly between Neonatal Units.*

### **What is a Nasogastric tube?**

A nasogastric or NG tube, is a specially designed tube that means that your baby can be fed without having to breast or bottle feed.

The tube is put into your baby's nostril, then runs down the back of their throat into the 'food pipe' or oesophagus and finally into their stomach.

### **Does it hurt (baby)?**

Passing a nasogastric tube is not pleasant but it should not hurt. The initial introduction of the NG tube into your baby's nostril often irritates them, as it would if you put something into your nose! But the procedure should not be painful.

### **Why does my child need a nasogastric tube?**

The decision to 'tube feed' a bay can be taken for many reasons which should have been discussed with you. It may be that your baby is not ready to feed by themselves yet, or it may be that your baby gets tired when feeding and needs to complete their feed with a nasogastric feed. If you are unsure as to why your baby is being tube fed please ask one of the nurses or doctors helping to care for your baby.

### **How long does the nasogastric tube stay in place?**

Nasogastric tube feeds are usually given until your baby can either breast or bottle feed without needing additional tube top-ups. Sometimes this will only be for a few days but it may be needed for weeks. Some babies may even go home tube feeding.

As to how long each tube stays in before it is changed depends on how dexterous your baby is! Depending on the type of nasogastric tube used they can stay in for up to 14 days but, often babies pull them out long before that! Unfortunately the tube will then need to be replaced, unless, of course, your baby is feeding well and not needing to have nasogastric tube top-ups.

### **Who puts in my baby's nasogastric tube?**

Normally, the nurse looking after your baby will pass their nasogastric tube here on the Neonatal Unit. It is a very quick and simple procedure.

### **Can I learn how to give my baby a nasogastric feed?**

In some cases we give parents the opportunity to learn how to nasogastrically feed their babies. If this is something you would rather not do, that's absolutely fine. However, if you



think you might like to learn how to do this, ask a member of staff to see if it is possible and what it entails. If you do decide to go ahead full training and support will be given until you feel confident.

**Can I learn how to pass my baby's nasogastric tube?**

In some circumstances, once you are confident with the nasogastric feeding, you may also be given the opportunity to learn how to pass a nasogastric tube. Again, you don't have to do this if you don't want to. However, if you do decide to go ahead, just as with the nasogastric feeding, full training and support will be given until you feel totally confident in passing and securing a tube.

Ends