

## Deciding about a feeding tube

### What is a feeding tube?

A way to give your body water and liquid food when you are not able to eat and drink as usual or when you are not able to eat and drink enough to maintain your health and promote healing.

### Where does the tube go?

- A tube may be placed down your nose into your stomach and used for a short time.
- Or an IV is placed in a vein or artery and used for a short time.
- Or a tube is placed through your skin into your stomach and can be used for a longer time.

### Benefits of a feeding tube

- To help heal from surgery
- To help heal from a sudden sickness
- To help during certain chronic illnesses
- To help improve strength and energy

### Risks of a feeding tube

- Bleeding or infection may happen where the tube is coming out of the body.
- Liquids may get into the lungs causing an infection known as aspiration pneumonia.
- The body may not be able to handle the liquids, and the liquids may start to collect in different parts of the body causing swelling and difficulty breathing.

### If you do not want a feeding tube

You will still get care to ease pain and other symptoms. If you are having trouble eating or drinking, speak with your doctor. If you are still eating by mouth and having trouble eating or drinking, you are at a greater risk of choking or having food enter your lungs, which can cause an infection. It is also important to speak with those who are important to you, so everyone knows your wishes about a feeding tube. You can also go the extra step and write down your wishes in legal documents called advance directives. Advance directives can be changed if your wishes change.

For more information on advance care planning, contact us at **844-677-5134** or [ChoicesandChampions@NovantHealth.org](mailto:ChoicesandChampions@NovantHealth.org).

You can also visit our website at [NovantHealth.org/ChoicesandChampions](https://www.novanthealth.org/ChoicesandChampions).