

Walker Veterinary Hospital

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GASTROSTOMY TUBE FEEDING

A gastrostomy tube is a small rubber tube that enters the stomach through the skin in the cat's side. It permits you to deliver food directly into the stomach.

The gastrostomy tube is used in cats with diseases that cause long-term anorexia or when jaw fractures or other mouth injuries are present that prevent eating.

How do I feed my cat through the tube?

A special food, listed below, is syringed through the tube two to four times per day. This food is formulated to meet the cat's nutritional needs; it should not cause vomiting or diarrhea. To feed your cat, follow these steps:

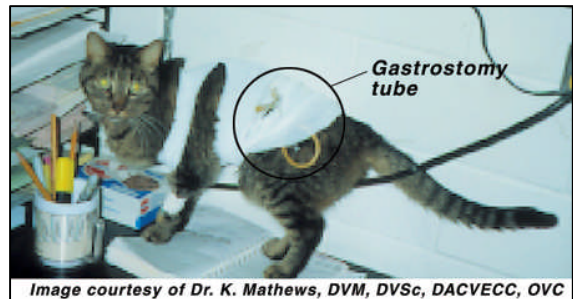


Image courtesy of Dr. K. Mathews, DVM, DVSc, DACVECC, OVC

1. Feed one of the following:

_____ Place 1 can of high quality feline growth diet + 10 oz (300ml) of water + 2 oz (60ml) of vegetable oil + 8 potassium chloride tablets in a blender and run at the fastest speed until the food is uniformly mixed. After mixing, pour the food through a kitchen strainer.

OR

2. Remove the cap from the feeding tube.

Using the syringe provided, inject _____ cc of the food into your cat's feeding tube _____ times per day FOR A TOTAL OF _____ cc PER 24 HOURS. It is helpful to inject the food slowly, about 1 cc per second, to prevent vomiting.

3. When the food has been injected, inject 10 cc of tap water through the tube so food does not remain in it. Replace the cap on the tube after completion.

4. Any remaining food should be stored in the refrigerator. Before the next feeding, it should be warmed to body temperature under hot tap water or in a microwave oven. If you heat it in a microwave oven, be sure to thoroughly mix the contents prior to feeding because of uneven heating. Also, always check the temperature prior to feeding to be sure that it is not too hot.

When and how is the tube removed?

Some cats require several weeks of tube feeding before their appetite will return or healing occurs. At least twice weekly, offer your cat a small amount of a favorite food by mouth so that you will know when its appetite is improving. The gastrostomy tube will not hinder chewing or swallowing. After your cat has been eating well for three to four days, it should be returned to the hospital for tube removal. Removal of the tube is simple and does not require anesthesia; however, you should not attempt to remove the tube on your own.

*This client information sheet is based on material written by Ernest Ward, DVM
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