**Making the Decision**

**Is a g-tube the right choice for my child?**

Making the decision for a gastrostomy tube can be a difficult choice. This page will give you the information you need to help decide if it is the right choice for your child and your family.

**Key Notes:**

The most common reason a child may need a g-tube is to get the nutrition they
 need to grow because they cannot eat and drink enough calories on their own.

Make sure you understand what you will need to care for your child’s g-tube.

The Pediatric Surgery Nurse will provide education to
parents and caregivers that choose to continue with a g-tube.

What is a Gastrostomy Tube?

A gastrostomy tube, commonly called a g-tube, is a feeding tube inserted through the belly directly into the stomach. This tube provides another way to give your child food and medicine to help them grow. It can also be used to release air or fluid out of the stomach. This tube may not be permanent but will stay in place until your child is able to grow without the use of the feeding tube.

**Why does my child need a G-tube?**

G-tubes are placed for many different reasons. The most common reason a child needs a gtube is to get the nutrition they need to grow if they cannot eat and drink enough to gain weight. Other reasons include having trouble swallowing, breathing food or fluid into the lungs when swallowing, or if your child has an esophagus that does not work properly.

**How is a G-tube Placed?**

A pediatric surgeon will place the g-tube in the operating room. Usually your child is in the operating room for 1 to 2 hours. Most of the time, a minimally invasive technique call a laproscopy is used. A small incision is made near the belly button so a small camera can be used to see inside the belly. Another small incision is made for the g-tube. Your child will likely stay overnight in the hospital to make sure he/she can tolerate feeds. During your hospital stay, you will be learn how to use and care for your child’s g-tube.

**Understanding the Option**

There are many benefits in having a g-tube but you may also face some challenges.
Take time to review the benefits and challenges with your family to help you decide what is best for your child.

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| Benefits | Challenges |
| * Temporary or permanent
* Still enjoy eating and drinking by mouth
* Continue normal activities, including tummy time
* Improve food and fluid intake
* Easier to give medications
* Safer feeding for some children
* Better growth and development
* Unnoticeable and comfortable tube
 | * Keeping the site clean and dry
* Knowing and caring for common problems
* The site can become irritated, infected, leak, or grow extra tissue
* Can be accidentally pulled out
* New life routine
* Can seem overwhelming at first
 |

**Acknowledge Your Feelings**

It is normal to feel overwhelmed with making this decision. This reaction may cause other feelings such as fear, worry, and guilt. It is important to remember that you did not cause your child’s illness or feeding difficulty. Let your child’s doctor know how you feel so they can do their best to support you with your decision.

**Support**

Your child’s healthcare team will help you learn how to care for your child’s g-tube before you go home. They will work with you to make a plan that works for you and your family. They will also provide you with necessary education and resources. Ask questions, especially if you do not understand the information.