

Gravity Tube Feeding Overview

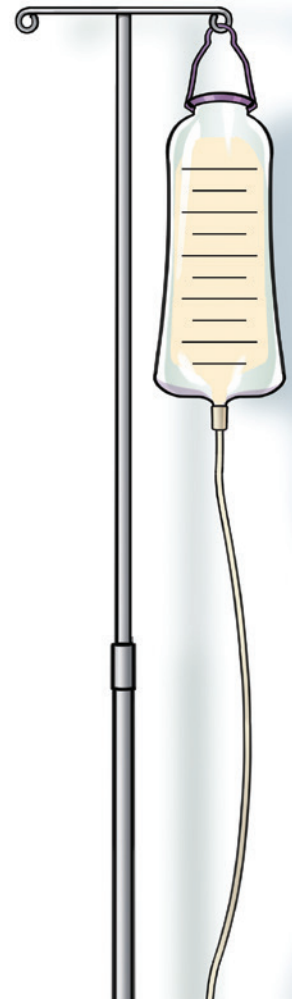
Note: This information is for educational purposes and should not replace medical advice. Always refer to the Feeding Plan recommended by the health care professional. When using any feeding set, instructions for use from the feeding set manufacturer must be followed.

Preparation and Supplies

1. Wash your hands and follow your institution's hygiene/aseptic technique procedures.
2. Gather all the equipment:
 - a. The formula
 - b. A feeding container / bag
 - c. An IV pole or wall hook
 - d. A 60-mL syringe
 - e. A clean cloth
 - f. A cup of water
3. Write the date and time on the feeding container.
4. Attach the gravity drip set to the container (if it is not already attached) and close the clamp.
5. Gently shake the product prior to each use.
6. Wipe the top of the product container with a clean, wet cloth prior to opening.
7. If desired, flush the feeding tube with _____ mL of water.

Administration

1. Pour the formula into the feeding container / bag.
2. Hang the container on an IV pole or a wall hook about 2 feet above and to the side of the feeding tube. Ensure that the head of the bed is in the proper position (approximately 30°– 45°).
3. Remove the cover from the end of the feeding set. The roller clamp should be closed.
4. Prime the feeding set by allowing the formula to flow into the tube.
5. Insert the tip of the feeding set (ENFit®*) into the feeding tube.
6. Slowly open the clamp on the tubing.
7. Set the flow to the desired gravity drip rate. Use the clamp to control the flow until desired rate is achieved. Make the flow faster by slowly opening the clamp. Make the flow slower by partially closing the clamp.
8. When the feeding is complete, close the clamp.
9. If extra water is desired after feedings, pour the prescribed amount into the container to flush the tube.
10. Open the clamp and let the water drip until gone.
11. Close the clamp and disconnect the feeding set.



Gravity Feeding Flow Rate

For gravity feeding, the formula flow rate will be _____ drops or _____ mL per _____ seconds.

- To determine the number of drops per hour, divide the dose by the feeding time (hours) and multiply it by the drip factor (based on the assumption of 14 drops = 1 mL of formula).
- To determine the number of drops per hour divide the number of drops per minute by 60.
- Watch the drip chamber and time the drops according to the following examples:

If goal rate per hour is:	Drops per minute (approximately):	Drops per 15 seconds (approximately):
60 mL	14	4
80 mL	19	5
100 mL	23	6
120 mL	28	7
140 mL	33	8

Note: The example above is based on 14 drops = 1 mL of formula. Depending on the viscosity of the enteral formula, the drops/mL may vary (10 drops = 1 mL; 14 drops = 1 mL; 20 drops = 1 mL). High viscosity will result in fewer drops; low viscosity will result in more drops.

Formula Hang Time Suggestions

The following are general guidelines related to hang times. Please follow directions for use provided by manufacturer of feeding set.

- Closed-system formulas such as Ready-to-Hang (RTH) has a hang-time of 48 hours. However, if RTH content is transferred from RTH container to a feeding bag, the product can be used within 24 hours.
- The formula should be decanted into the bag in amounts that will be delivered within 8 hours (this will depend on rate). The remainder should be covered and refrigerated until poured into the feeding bag. The feeding bag and feeding set into which the RTH content is transferred can be used for up to 24 hours. After 24 hours, the opened product should be discarded.
- Note: AN has not conducted studies nor are other data available to support the accurate delivery of the enteral formulation with this feeding method.
- Open-system formulas have a hang time of up to 8 hours for ready-to-use liquid formulas. Follow label instructions for all reconstituted powders.

Storage

- Cover any unused formula and write the date on it.
- Store it in the refrigerator.
- Discard any open, unused ready-to use formula that has been stored in the refrigerator after 24 hours.

References:

Boullata JI, et al. *JPEN J Parenter Enteral Nutr.* 2017;41:15-103.

Carrera AL, Mays A, Malone A, eds. *A.S.P.E.N. Enteral Nutrition Handbook.* 2nd ed. Silver Spring, MD: A.S.P.E.N.;2019.

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Mueller CM, ed. *The A.S.P.E.N. Adult Nutrition Support Core Curriculum.* 2nd ed. Silver Spring, MD: A.S.P.E.N.;2012.

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