

# HOW DO I MEASURE THE PH OF GASTRIC ASPIRATE?

Where enteral nutrition/medication has already passed through the tube, wait at least one hour without further feeding before pH testing the gastric aspirate

Before and after handling the tube, wash your hands with liquid soap and water, and dry them thoroughly.

You will need:

- 60ml enteral syringe
- pH indicator strips (CE marked for human gastric aspirate and in date)
- Water, amount and type (e.g. cooled, boiled) as recommended by your healthcare professional
- Extension set (if using a Button).

## Obtaining gastric aspirate from a NASOGASTRIC TUBE

Confirm the feeding tube remains in the correct position by checking the cm graduation markings at the nostril remain the same as last observed and that the external length of the tube has not changed



Kink the tube in your fingers



Attach a 60ml enteral syringe to the end of the tube. Release the kink between your fingers



Very slowly pull back the plunger until 0.5-1ml of fluid appears in the syringe



Again, kink the tube between your fingers and detach the syringe



Close the end of the cap of the tube, if present



Release the kink

# Obtaining gastric aspirate from a BALLOON GASTROSTOMY TUBE



Ensure the clamp is closed



Attach the syringe to the connector



Open the clamp



Very slowly pull back the plunger  
until 0.5-1mm of fluid appears  
in the syringe



Close the clamp



Detach syringe from the tube and  
replace the end cap



Reopen the clamp

# Obtaining gastric aspirate from a LOW PROFILE DEVICE (BUTTON)



Attach an extension set



Ensure the clamp on the tube is closed before removing the end cap



Attach a 60ml enteral syringe to the end of the tube



Open the clamp on the tube



Very slowly pull back the plunger until 0.5-1mm of fluid appears in the syringe



Close the clamp



Detach the syringe from the tube and replace the end cap



Detach the extension set and carefully close the Button

## PERFORMING THE PH TEST



Now that you have your gastric aspirate, drop the fluid from the syringe onto the pH indicator strip



Read the pH as per manufacturer's instructions

If the pH value is 1-5.5 it suggests the tube is in the correct position - the stomach. However, it is important to consider all other relevant factors.

### REMEMBER:

If you are unable to obtain a pH within the recommended safety limits, **you must not use the tube.**

If the pH value from a **PEG/balloon gastrostomy tube/Button** is more than 5.5, do not administer anything via the tube. Check the pH value again in 30-60 minutes.

If you have a **nasogastric tube** and the pH value is 5 or 5.5, do not administer anything via the tube. A second competent person must measure and confirm the pH is 5 or 5.5.

If the pH value remains more than 5.5, **do not use** and contact the managing healthcare professional.

Always confirm the external tube length has not changed as well as measuring the pH to confirm the correct position.

**It is very important that you do not administer anything, including enteral nutrition, water or medication, via the tube until confirmation the tube is in the correct position.**

This information is intended for patients, or carers, who are being enterally fed.