

# Medication Administration via Feeding Tube

## PURPOSE

To safely and efficiently administer medication via feeding tube.

## POLICY

1. **Do not mix medication directly with feeding formula. This practice may alter the therapeutic effect of the drug or disrupt the emulsion of the feeding.**
2. Use liquid drug forms whenever possible. When changing medications from their solid dosage forms to liquid, the schedule of the medication may need to be adjusted due to differences in absorption characteristics.
3. A variety of oral solid dosage forms are available that should not be crushed prior to administration because of their formulation. In general, these include:
  - a. Slow release (continuous release, sustained release, delayed action, long acting, repeat action, time delayed) medications
  - b. Enteric or protective coated medications
  - c. Medications formulated for sublingual or buccal absorption or those designated to exert a local effect in the mouth (lozenges)
  - d. Medications that are offensive-tasting to the patient; these may be given to patients with feeding tubes
4. Some capsules and Spansules<sup>®</sup> may be carefully opened and their contents administered in water.  
**NOTE:** Small bore feeding tubes may clog if Spansule<sup>®</sup> contents are larger than the bore. Do not attempt to administer Spansule<sup>®</sup> contents through small bore feeding tubes.
5. Give each drug separately to avoid incompatibility reactions within the tube.
6. **It is the responsibility of the clinician to research compatibility between the enteral formula and prescribed medications. Facts and Comparisons has this information in table format and should be a reference in any pharmacy.**
7. Flush the tube with 20-30ml of tap water **before** and **after** giving medications. Flush with at least 5ml of water between medications.
8. For ease of administration, inject medication through an injection port or stopcock attached to the feeding tube.

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## RESPONSIBILITY

The Clinical Specialist has the responsibility for approval of, compliance with, and revisions to this policy.

## MODIFICATION/REVISION

This policy is subject to modification or revision in part or its entirety to reflect changes in conditions subsequent to the effective date of this policy.

## REFERENCES

1. Infusion Nursing Standards of Practice – Revised 2016; Journal of Infusion Nursing, Supplement to January/February 2016, Volume 39, Number 1S.
2. Infusion Nursing: An Evidence-Based Approach, Third Edition edited by Mary Alexander, Ann Corrigan, Lisa Gorski, Judy Hankins, and Roxanne Perucca.
3. INS (Infusion Nurses Society) Policies and Procedures for Infusion Nursing, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.