UVA Nutrition Services

UVA Digestive Health Center

Medications That Can Go Through Feeding Tubes

Many medicines may be put into your feeding tube. But first, here are some important things you need to know.

1. Some pills or tablets may be crushed and mixed with water to put into your feeding tube.
2. Some capsules may be opened and the contents then mixed with water to put into your feeding tube.
3. Ask your pharmacist about putting medications into your feeding tube. This is because there are some medications that may not be put into a feeding tube; see the following warning:

> **Important Note**: NEVER crush or open capsules of medications labeled *extended-release* (designated as noted below) or *enteric-coated*. Extended-release formulations will be designated by:
> - XL, XR, or XT (extended-release)
> - SR (sustained-release)
> - CR, CD (controlled-release)
> - LA (long-acting)

It is extremely important to:

- Flush your PEG tube *before* AND *after* administration of any medication.
  - Use with a minimum of 5 mL between medications and 30 mL after all medications have been administered.
  - Remember, flushing helps prevent your feeding tube from getting clogged.

How to crush? A mortar and pestle is one type of pill crusher. You may purchase one of these at the following stores for under $20.00. A few locations to check are listed below (note: the information provided is meant only as a guide; UVAHS does not promote any certain brand or store):

- Bed, Bath and Beyond®
- Target®
- www.ikea.com
- Sur la table
- cheftools.com
- amazon.com/kitchen
- **and many other sources**

Hand-held pill crushers are available at: www.pillcrusher.com or other medical supply stores

Examples of commonly used medications in Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). Many (but not all) can be crushed, some are available in liquid or below the tongue (sublingual) form	
PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS	
For ALS: • Riluzole (Rilutek)	**For anxiety:** • Lorazepam (Ativan) [2] – 2 mg/mL liquid can be used sublingually also
For depression: • Citalopram (Celexa) liquid available • Escitalopram (Lexapro) liquid available • Fluoxetine (Prozac)[1] • Paroxetine (Paxil) liquid available[1] • Sertraline (Zoloft) liquid available • Venlafaxine (Effexor)[1]	**For restlessness:** • Haloperidol (Haldol)[2] – 2 mg/mL liquid available; can be used sublingually also **For insomnia:** • Lorazepam (Ativan) [2] – 2 mg/mL liquid can be used sublingually also • Ambien (Zolpidem)[1]
For excess secretions: • Amitriptyline (Elavil) • Glycopyrrolate (Robinul) • Hyoscyamine (Levsin)[1]	**For nausea/vomiting** • Promethazine (Phenergan) – liquid available • Haloperidol (Haldol)[2] – 2 mg/mL liquid available; can be used sublingually also
For more severe pain: • Morphine[2] – 10 mg/5 mL liquid preferred for G tube; 100 mg/5 mL for sublingual use available • Oxycodone (OxyContin, Roxicodone)[2] – 5 mg/5 mL and 20 mg/mL available	**For air hunger/ shortness of breath:** • Morphine[2] – 10 mg/5 mL liquid preferred for G tube; 100 mg/5 mL for sublingual use available • Lorazepam (Ativan) [2] – 2 mg/mL liquid can be used sublingually also
For constipation: • Lactulose – liquid available	
OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATIONS	
For reflux: • Lansoprazole (Prevacid) - disintegrating tablet: place the 15 mg tablet in an oral syringe and draw up ~4 mL water, or place the 30 mg tablet in an oral syringe and draw up ~10 mL water. After tablet has dispersed, administer within 15 minutes. Refill the syringe with water (2 mL for the 15 mg tablet; 5 mL for the 30 mg tablet), shake gently, then administer any remaining contents.	**For cough:** • Robitussin DM (dextromethorphan and guaifenesin) **For insomnia:** • Diphenhydramine (Benadryl) **To thin secretions:** • Guaifenesin (Robitussin, Mucinex)[1]available in capsules, oral solution, syrup, or tablets
For milder pain: • Acetaminophen (Tylenol) liquid available • Naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn)[1] • Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, Nuprin) liquid available	**For constipation:** • Docusate (Colace) - liquid available • Senna • Polyethylene glycol 3350 (Miralax) – liquid available

Notes:

[1]Extended-release formulations are available and cannot be crushed.

[2]If using morphine 20 mg/mL, oxycodone 20 mg/mL, lorazepam 2 mg/mL, or haloperidol 2 mg/mL, mix in 25 mL of water, then put all through tube, otherwise this small amount might stick to the tubing.