

HYDRATION & NUTRITION

There may come a time when you find it hard to eat and drink. To make informed decisions about what you may want in this situation it is important to understand your options.

The most common forms of hydration and nutrition support are:

- Tube feeding
- Intravenous (IV)

It is important to have a discussion with your doctor about what option may work best for you.

Tube Feeding & IV hydration work best if:

- You are healthy
- It is only needed for a short period of time such as when recovering from a serious illness or surgery

Tube Feeding & IV hydration usually do not work if:

- You have chronic health problems
- You have an illness that can no longer be successfully treated
- You are weak, frail or elderly

Tube feeding

A tube that is placed in your nose and down into your stomach or through the skin into your stomach through which you receive a nutritional formula.

Possible side effects of tube feeding:

- Fluid buildup causing bloating, swelling, shortness of breath and pain
- The tube itself may be uncomfortable
- Infection at the insertion site

IV hydration

A needle is placed in your vein to administer nutrition and hydration.

Possible side effects of IV hydration:

- Fluid buildup causing shortness of breath and pain
- Swelling in your arms and legs
- Infection or pain at the insertion site

The topic of providing food and nutrition is not only a practical one but also an emotional and social one. Because we associate food with providing love and care, it is important to understand that as people become sicker they generally have less of an appetite. Talk about eating and what it means to you and your loved ones.

If you decide you do not want a feeding tube or IV hydration:

Talk to your doctor and your loved ones so they know your decisions and a plan can be made. Call Hospice & Community Care to speak with someone about Advance Care Planning or to request Five Wishes®, a free Advance Care Planning Booklet.

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