



## Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy (PEG Tube)

In the realm of medical advancements, the Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy, commonly referred to as the PEG procedure, stands out as a beacon of hope for individuals facing challenges with oral intake.

### What Exactly is a PEG?

Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy, or PEG, is more than just a medical term. It's a life-changing procedure for many. At its core, PEG involves the insertion of a flexible feeding tube directly into the stomach. This tube serves as a direct channel, allowing nutrition, fluids, and even medications to bypass the mouth and esophagus, ensuring that the individual receives the necessary sustenance.



### The Need for PEG

The human body requires nourishment to function. However, certain medical conditions or events, such as strokes, surgeries affecting the oral cavity or esophagus, or specific neurological disorders, can impede one's ability to eat or drink normally. In such cases, the PEG procedure emerges as a viable solution, ensuring that the affected individuals receive adequate nutrition. PEG tube placement is not performed in our freestanding Endoscopy Center but in the hospital GI lab as an inpatient or outpatient.

### Preparing for the Procedure

Preparation is key to the success of the PEG procedure. Patients are usually advised to fast for several hours before the procedure. This ensures that the stomach is empty, minimizing potential complications. Furthermore, informing the medical team about any allergies, medications being taken, and other health conditions is crucial. This information helps tailor the procedure to the individual's needs, ensuring safety and effectiveness.

**WARNING:** Individuals taking the semaglutide class of medications known as (GLP-1) receptor agonists may delay how their stomach empties. This may increase the risk of aspiration under anesthesia for upper endoscopy (EGD) exams. ALL patients taking these medications MUST stop

them temporarily for 1 week before their procedure appointment. Failure to do so will result in the cancellation of the procedure, which will have to be rescheduled.



## The Procedure: Step by Step

1. Sedation: Patients are given an intravenous sedative and local anesthesia to ensure comfort. This combination ensures that the patient is relaxed and pain-free throughout the procedure.
2. Endoscope Introduction: The doctor introduces a lighted, flexible tube called an endoscope. This tool provides a clear view of the stomach's interior, guiding the doctor during the procedure.
3. Tube Placement: Using the endoscope as a guide, the doctor makes a small incision in the upper abdomen, creating a direct path to the stomach. Through this opening, the feeding tube is introduced and secured in place.

## Life After the PEG Procedure

Post-procedure, patients will notice a dressing at the PEG site. This dressing, essential for preventing infections, is typically removed after a day or two. Subsequent care involves daily cleaning of the site with diluted soap and water. It's essential to keep the area dry and clean to prevent complications.

## Feeding Through the PEG Tube

The primary purpose of the PEG tube is to facilitate feeding. This tube introduces specialized liquid nutrition, fluids, and sometimes medications directly into the stomach. Depending on the reason for the PEG placement, some patients might still have restrictions on oral intake. It's essential to discuss and understand these restrictions with the healthcare provider.

## Understanding the Risks

While the PEG procedure is generally safe, like all medical procedures, it carries some risks. These might include minor issues like pain or discomfort at the PEG site or more severe complications like infections, aspiration, or even bowel wall perforation. Being informed and vigilant can help early detect and manage these potential complications.

## Insurance and the PEG Procedure

Medical procedures can be expensive, but the good news is that most insurance providers cover the PEG procedure, especially when deemed medically necessary. However, it's always wise to consult the insurance provider to understand coverage details and out-of-pocket expenses.

## Conclusion

While seemingly complex, the PEG procedure is a testament to medical advancements prioritizing patient well-being. It offers a lifeline to those who, for various reasons, cannot consume food or drink in the traditional manner. With the right care and understanding, the PEG tube can significantly improve the quality of life for many individuals.

## Center For Digestive Health & Nutrition

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