

HELPING TO MANAGE ENTERALLY FED PATIENTS IN HOSPITALS DURING COVID-19

We understand that at this time, contingency plans are being made across the UK to support increased hospital capacity during the Covid-19 pandemic. At Nutricia we will do everything we possibly can to support hospitals and Trusts to make sure patients continue to get the nutrition support they need. As a company, we must also be mindful that along with increased demand on the hospital service, we need to manage requests across the healthcare spectrum and are taking every step to protect the supply to all.

At Nutricia, we've been working with NHS Dietitians and spent some time thinking about alternative ways to support you and your patients during peak demand periods. In this communication we have focused on how patients are enterally fed and managed in hospital and on discharge, which is particularly important considering the increase in capacity demands ahead.

MANAGING PUMP RESOURCES

MUST DO's before requesting more pumps:

- Locate all pumps in your ward/hospital/community setting. Make sure any which are not working or not required are sent back to Nutricia so they can be serviced, cleaned and redistributed as soon as possible
- Check with your community colleagues if there are any Homeward patients that have multiple pumps and may be able to manage with only one pump. For example, are any extra pumps allocated to other family member locations/schools etc. that are now unlikely to be used in the short term. Again, please request a return to Nutricia so they can be redistributed as soon as possible
- Prioritise which patients will continue to require a pump and identify those groups that can be fed alternatively in the hospital
- Ensure there is no more than one pump per bed for example in ICU/HDU settings
- Ensure all ward staff have a basic knowledge of methods of feeding and pump operation; get patients involved in self-care as this can help to ensure swift discharges and any follow up training can happen in the community - consider other alternatives to pump feeding as first line management e.g. bolus feeding.

Options to consider if pumps are limited in a hospital setting or upon discharge:

- For less severely ill patients, use pump sharing in 12-hour shifts, i.e. using a pump for more than one patient; Ensure pumps are sanitized between each patient
- Use more concentrated feeds and higher feeding rates (if appropriate)
- Use larger, less frequent water flushes to reduce administration time/resource required
- Consider running water and feed together via a 2-Pack connector if extra fluids are required
- Have a single mobile pump at ward level for ad hoc situations, for example to dispense bolus feeds over an hour period or when gravity feeds may have underrun, and a faster rate is required to meet needs in 24-hours.

Alternative feeding methods that can be considered during peak demand:

Nutricia recommend that bolus feeding is the preferred alternative method where a pump is unavailable, or you are prioritizing for other patients. This is because it can be easily managed and requires little equipment. Gravity feeding set supply from Nutricia are limited as it is not a frequently used method of administration in the UK however if you are considering this please speak with one of our team first.

Bolus feeding

Bolus feeding can be deployed where pumps are prioritised for other patients:

- Consider if other staff (including Dietetic staff) can be trained on how to bolus feed both from an Oral Nutritional Supplement bottle or an OpTri bottle/Pack in the event a pump is not available on a ward
- Consider patients that are younger and more mobile patients/carers for discharge on bolus feeding. Could they even be trained to administer their own boluses at ward level to minimize nursing intervention?
- Nutrison and Nutrini/Tentrini OpTri bottles don't always require a Bolus Adaptor and can be easily decanted into syringes (use a 60ml syringe) or bolus feeding sets where available
- If a pump is available for shared use on a ward, then it can be used to deliver a faster or larger bolus dependent on need
- For home discharge consider those patients/carers:
 - With no dexterity issues
 - Able to tolerate the bolus volumes
 - Who do not want to work the technology of a pump
 - Who may want to mimic more normal eating and drinking routines +/- or want to be more mobile
- Always read the instructions to ensure you follow storage guidance once a Pack or Bottle is opened
- For patients with very high calorie and protein needs a combination of bolus and pump feeding may be the most feasible option
- More instructions on gravity/bolus feeding if staff need reminding of how to administer feeds in this way can be found here: [nutriciahcp.com/adult/Nutricia_Homeward_Nursing_Service_\(Flocare_Support_Materials\)/](https://www.nutriciahcp.com/adult/Nutricia_Homeward_Nursing_Service_(Flocare_Support_Materials)/)
- Refer to recent Bolus Feeding Guidelines (for adults) here: https://www.nutriciahcp.com/adult/Studies/Bolus_feeding_in_Adults_A_Practical_Guide/

Gravity feeding

While we appreciate that gravity feeding sets are not as accurate as pump feeding, they are still useful to consider for patients who can be fed continuously via enteral feeding. If you are reserving your pumps for the most severely ill patients, consider gravity feeding for more medically stable, ward-based patients.

- Training may be required for healthcare staff and/or patients/carers at home since gravity feeding is less frequently initiated
- Patients to consider for gravity feeding are:
 - Those that require continuous feeding who are not critically ill
 - Those that can be fed over a longer period
 - Those that are unsuitable for bolus feeding, e.g. dysphagic patients at risk of vomiting on bolus feeds
 - Patients that have shown signs of gastro-intestinal intolerance, e.g. nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea when using bolus feeds.

What about hygiene issues at ward level with devices?

- Ensure pumps are sanitized after every use in line with infection control guidelines
- Follow your local Trust guidance or speak with your Infection Control team if you are in any doubt around how to manage pumps +/- or enteral feeding in general.

If you have any questions about this advice, please call the Nutricia Resource Centre on 01225 751098 who will redirect you to one of our specialist Dietitians.

You can also email resourcecentre@nutricia.com if you have any queries about this or wish to discuss anything with one of our team.