

What should I do if my gastrostomy tube falls out?

If your Gastrostomy tube falls out, the hole where it enters your stomach (called the “stoma tract”) will close very quickly. Placing an emergency ‘stoma stopper’ in the hole straight away will keep it open until a new tube can be inserted.

Enplug™ stoma stoppers

- A stoma stopper is a device made of coloured silicone
- There are 4 different coloured stoma stoppers in a pack
- The colour indicates the size (the width of the stem). The sizes are printed on the top of the disk head



Black – 10Fr (Smallest)

White – 12Fr

Green – 14Fr

Orange – 16Fr (Largest)

(“Fr” stands for “French Gauge” – the measurement that indicates the size of the tube)

- Enplug™ stoma stoppers are for emergency use.
- They are delivered by Abbott Hospital to Home, your home care delivery company
- Always make sure you know where your stoma stopper is kept
- If you are unable to find your Enplug™ stoma stopper in an emergency, read **Step 2**
- If you need a new pack of Enplug™ stoma stoppers, please contact Hospital to Home or your Dietitian in the usual way

If your gastrostomy tube falls out, please read the following instructions.

Step 1 - Insert the Enplug™

As soon as possible, you or your carer should insert the Enplug™ stoma stopper into the stoma tract (hole) according to the following instructions:

- Clean and dry the area surrounding the stoma in your usual way
- If there is any bleeding or injury visible, do not place the stoma stopper, and contact your Abbott Nurse Advisor or District Nurse immediately
- Start with the stopper that is the same size, or slightly smaller, than the size of your feeding tube, for example:
 - 16Fr feeding tube- start with the orange, 16Fr Enplug™ stoma stopper
 - 15Fr feeding tube- start with the green, 14Fr Enplug™ stoma stopper
- Wet the stem of the Enplug™ stoma stopper with tap water, or coat with water-soluble lubricant, if available
- Insert the stem of the Enplug™ stoma stopper slowly and gently into the stoma tract. The stopper is fully inserted when the head disk is flush against the skin
- If the stopper doesn't go in easily, attempt to place the next smallest size, and continue going downwards in size until you have successfully placed a stopper
- If placement is difficult, painful or there is bleeding, stop and contact your Abbott Nurse Advisor or District Nurse. If they are unavailable, go to the Accident and Emergency department immediately
- Secure the Enplug™ stopper with a plaster or dressing

Step 2 – Contact the person who normally replaces your tube

For example, Abbott Nurse Advisor, Hospital Nutrition Nurse or District Nurse) and ask them to arrange for you to be seen for your gastrostomy tube to be replaced.

Step 3 – If you need further support

If the Abbott Nurse Advisor or District Nurse is unavailable, and you need your tube for urgent fluids or medication, go to the Accident and Emergency department for a tube replacement as soon as possible. Take your spare feeding tube with you, if you have one.

For more information

We have produced a video showing what to do and how to place a stoma stopper, which can be found on our Vimeo channel.

vimeo.com/338840745

Alternatively, scan the QR code using the camera on a smartphone or tablet, to go to our website and follow the link in the “Tube Feeding” section.

