Clinical Guideline

ENTERAL FEEDING INFECTION CONTROL GUIDELINE

SETTING  
Bristol Royal Hospital For Children (BRHC) and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)

FOR STAFF  
All clinical staff

PATIENTS  
Paediatric inpatients

This document outlines procedures to follow when administering enteral tube feeding into the stomach or small bowel. Enteral liquid feeds support the growth of pathogenic microorganisms. Best practice advice follows to reduce the risks of microbial contamination and infection.

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HYGIENE PRECAUTIONS

- Strict hand decontamination in line with Trust Hand Hygiene Guideline must be carried out before handling enteral feeding systems.

- Feed bottle tops or cartons must be wiped clean with an alcohol swab before opening.

- Feeding system must be set up in line with Aseptic Technique and Aseptic Non Touch Technique Policy.

- Clinical waste must be disposed of safely and all enteral equipment cleaned after use.

FEED PREPARATION AND STORAGE

- Ready to hang (RTH) pre-packaged sterile feeds are used in preference to powdered or decanted feeds.

- RTH feeds must be stored in the ward kitchen in line with manufacturer instructions and food hygiene regulations.

- The Housekeeper (or a designated Nurse) must order feeds and supplements using the ward supplement stock list, and rotate stock to prevent expiration. Contact the ward Dietitian to order additional patient prescriptions or feeds for discharge.
• Liquid feeds, wherever possible, must be decanted in the Special Feed Unit (SFU) on Level 6 or Feed Room (NICU). Feed preparation at ward level must be minimized

• Powdered infant formula (PIF), including additives (e.g. Thixo-D) must be made up in the SFU. There is a Feed Room on NICU, but all PIF must be made up in the SFU, because water must be pre-boiled and cooled to the correct temperature

• Contact the Dietitian (Monday to Friday) to request a powdered formula to be made

• If the Dietitian is unavailable (out of hours / weekends), the Medical Team can prescribe a feed for the SFU staff to make by completing a Special Feed Request Form

• A trained Associate Practitioner or Nurse must make up a feed in the SFU out of hours. Refer to Nurse Manual Making Up Feeds Out of Hours,(paper copy in the SFU).

• Powdered, decanted or diluted feeds may be refrigerated for up to 24 hours. The use by date and time are printed on the containers

HANGING TIMES

Sterile Feeds

• RTH sterile feed bags may hang continuously at room temperature for up to 24 hours

• Decanted sterile feeds have a limited hanging time of 4 hours.

• Whenever a feed bag or container is changed, the giving set must also be changed

• A new RTH feed bag and giving set must therefore be used for each pump bolus feed

Non-Sterile Feeds

• Powdered formula, decanted feeds, and feeds with additives (e.g. Thixo-D), may hang continuously at room temperature for up to 4 hours maximum.

• A new feed container and giving set must be used for each 4 hour period

• Breast milk can be administered via syringe pump continuously at room temperature for 4 hours maximum

• The Dietitian must record hanging and container change times on the Yellow Feed Sheet

ADMINISTERING WATER

• Sterile water must be used to flush and clean enteral feeding tubes in all patients

• Sterile water given via enteral pump in a sterile container must be changed every 4 hours

• Enteral feeding tubes must be flushed before and after each feed and each medication with sterile water (exception NICU – to avoid fluid overload tubes are cleared with air)

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ADMINISTERING ENTERAL FEEDS

- Always check expiration date and time on the feed container before a feed.
- Oral feeds may be warmed gently by placing the bottle in hot water or using a bottle warmer, but must then be offered within 15 minutes (exception NICU – do not warm feeds in tap water). Microwaves should not be used for warming feeds.
- Continuous and bolus feeds given via an enteral feeding pump must not be warmed. This increases the risk of bacterial infection.

RE-USE OF EQUIPMENT

- All enteral feeding equipment is single use in hospital. A clinician who disregards the ‘single use’ label transfers legal liability for safe performance of that product from the manufacturer to themselves. Refer to Enteral Feeding Equipment Management SOP.
- An exception is gastrostomy and jejunostomy feeding extension sets and adaptors, which must be replaced weekly.
- Low profile / button extension sets must be washed in warm soapy water after each use and air dried with the clamp open on a clean surface or container ready for the next feed.
- Y extension sets (malecot and balloon gastrostomy tubes) must be changed weekly, but may be removed for cleaning up to a maximum of once daily. More frequent removal may cause stretching and leakage. Rinse in warm soapy water and air dry on a clean surface.
- If the child is under 1 year old or immune suppressed, extension sets and adaptors must be sterilised between each use. Infection Control advise if a steri sack cannot be used, sets must be washed out in hot soapy water, then sterilised in cold water sterilisation solution for 20 minutes, then rinsed with sterile water and air dried in a clean container.
- Where cold water sterilisation solution is unavailable, extension sets must be left attached, flushed through with sterile water and must be replaced every 24 hours.
- All syringes in BRHC are single use. The same syringe may be used to give different liquids at one time; for example both the feed and water flushes either side of the feed.
- Community teams may have differing advice for the re-use of enteral feeding equipment. The Dietitian must communicate the policy for home to the Nurse and Parents or Carers.
- Patients discharged in Bristol under Home Management Services (HMS) are given reusable syringes at home (exception immune-compromised children and infants under 1)
TRAINING

- All Nursing Staff administering enteral feeds must be trained in the safe management of the hospital contract enteral feeding system
- All Parents and Carers must be educated in hand decontamination techniques and safe management of the enteral feeding administration system before discharge

REFERENCES

1 Department of Health and the Paediatric Group of the British Dietetic Association (2007) Guidelines for Making up Special Feeds for Infants and Children in Hospital. Published in collaboration with the Food Standards Agency.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Hand Hygiene Policy
- Aseptic Technique and Aseptic Non Touch Technique Policy
- Special Feed Request Form
- Nurse Manual Making Up Feeds Out of Hours in The SFU
- Enteral Feeding Equipment Management SOP

SAFETY

Risk to patient of microbial contamination that may lead to infection if this guideline is not strictly followed

QUERIES

Paediatric Nutrition and Dietetics, extension 28802

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