

Radiologically Inserted Gastrostomy (RIG)

Patient information factsheet

What is a RIG?

- A radiologically inserted gastrostomy (RIG) is a small feeding tube.
- It is placed into your stomach through your skin.
- Doctors use X-rays to guide it into the right place.
- It can give you liquid food, drinks, and medicine. You do not need to swallow to get them.

Why might I need a RIG?

You might need a RIG if you:

- Cannot eat and drink enough by mouth.
- Have difficulty swallowing safely.
- Need long-term nutrition support during treatment of an illness.

Benefits of a RIG

- Helps you get important nutrition and medication if you cannot swallow safely.
- It is more comfortable and works well for long-term feeding.
- It is better for long use than temporary tubes.

Preparing for the procedure

- You will usually go onto a hospital ward the day before or on the day itself.
- Fasting: Do not eat or drink anything for at least six hours before the procedure.
- Tell the team if you take blood-thinning medicines like warfarin or clopidogrel.
- Also tell them if you have allergies. This includes allergies to contrast dye. Contrast dye is a special liquid used in scans to help Doctors see clearly.

- You may be asked to drink a special contrast drink before the procedure. This helps the Radiologist see your bowel clearly.

During the procedure

- A thin tube may be placed in your nose that goes down into your stomach. It helps put air in your stomach during the procedure.
- This makes it easier for Doctors to place the RIG.
- This may feel a bit uncomfortable, and you will feel the need to burp.
- The RIG procedure will be done in the radiology department. Doctors will use X-rays to guide the procedure.
- A cannula (thin tube) may be placed in your arm for fluids and pain relief.
- You will be given a local anaesthetic to numb the skin.
- Small stitches or buttons may be placed on your abdomen. These hold the stomach close to the abdominal wall while the tube is inserted.
- A small balloon on the end of the tube is inflated inside your stomach to keep it in place.
- This usually takes between 30 to 90 minutes.

After the procedure

- You will be monitored on the ward for a few hours.
- You may be **nil by mouth** (nothing to eat/drink) for several hours after.
- Nurses will start by rinsing your tube with clean (sterile) water.
- Later, they will slowly begin feeding through the tube when it is safe.
- You will be taught how to use and care for your RIG before you go home.
- You will get help and support, so you know what to do.

Risks and complications

Although a RIG is generally safe, like with all procedures there are possible risks:

Common/mild

- Pain or discomfort around insertion site
- Fluid or feed might leak around the tube.
- Skin infection or irritation around the tube entry site

Less common/serious

- Major bleeding
- Infection inside the stomach area (called peritonitis).
- Damage to nearby organs such as bowel or liver
- X-ray radiation exposure (very low dose)

Rare

- The tube might come out if the balloon breaks.
- Sometimes the tube cannot be placed. If this happens, another method may be used.

You will be asked to sign a consent form after the team has explained these risks.

Caring for your RIG at home

Your hospital team or Dietitian will explain and demonstrate how to:

- Flush the tube before and after feeds or medications to prevent blockages.
- Clean around the insertion site and check for signs of infection.
- Check and maintain the balloon volume as required.

Seek advice if you notice:

- Unusual pain, redness, swelling or discharge around the tube.
- The tube is loose or falls out.
- Fever or vomiting.
- Blockage or feeds not passing through.

Questions and support

- If you have any questions or concerns at any time, speak to your Nurse, Dietitian or the radiology team.
- They are there to help and support you throughout your care journey.
- For questions about your appointment at the Imaging Department please contact us on 020 7288 5888 (Monday to Friday from 9am to 3pm).

Contact our Trust

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on **020 7288 5551** or whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net.

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet, please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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