

Exploring Home Blended Food for Tube Feeding

There are different ways to get nutrition through tube feeding.

People may use store-bought formula because it is easy to use, and the nutrition content is known. Others may choose to make their own blended food at home using foods familiar to them. Some people choose to include both home blended food and store-bought formula.

Thinking about the below questions, benefits, and challenges can help you decide if home blended food for tube feeding is right for you. Discuss the questions with your healthcare team to learn more.

Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can I have a variety of foods in my diet?• Am I able to digest food well?• Am I at a higher risk of food poisoning because of my health?
Nutrition needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do I have regular access to a variety of foods so I can make nutritious blended meals?• Can I get enough nutrition in a volume of blended food I can tolerate?• Can blended food meet my special diet needs (food allergies or intolerances)?
Feeding tube	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can my feeding tube* be used for home blended food? <p>*Check with your home nutrition support team about which feeding tubes can be used.</p>
Feeding method	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can I use a gravity feeding set or syringe for my meals?• Can I finish the full volume of a blended meal in less than 2 hours?• Can I get the full volume of blended food I need during the day?
Shopping and cooking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Am I able to shop for groceries and supplies when needed?• Do I have access to a kitchen with a fridge and a high-power blender?• Do I have the time, skills, and confidence to prepare blended food?• Can I safely store my blended food?

Benefits of home blended food

- Includes a wide variety of foods.
- Meets allergy and special diet needs.
- Makes it easy to enjoy the same meals as your family—just blended.
- Often costs less than formula, depending on your nutrition needs and food choices.
- Offers options with fewer additives, preservatives, and no added sugar.
- Can help you poop more regularly.
- May lead to less reflux, vomiting, and retching.

Challenges of home blended food

- Meals may change from day to day. Some meals may have more nutrition, while others have not as much—but it usually evens out over time.
- It may be hard to get enough nutrition from blended food, since you may need a higher volume than you would with formula.
- If you have trouble digesting certain ingredients or foods, like those high in fibre, it may be harder to tolerate home blended meals.
- Preparing blended food takes more time and effort than using formula.
- Food can get stuck in your tube if it's not blended smoothly, or if your tube is too small or not the right type.

Common questions

- **How long will it take to change from formula to home blended food?**

It may take 4–6 weeks to change to home blended food. This allows time to adjust recipes, monitor tolerance, and meet your nutrition needs with support of your dietitian.

- **Who will help guide me?**

Your dietitian will help you with the process of transitioning from store-bought formula to home blended foods. Your dietitian will also help you make sure your nutrition needs are met.

- **Will making blended foods at home take a lot of time and effort?**

Home blended food often takes about the same time and effort as a regular family meal for cooking and cleaning up.

Feeding equipment

Talk with your healthcare team about your equipment and supply needs. If you have already qualified for a pump, you may be able to use it for home blended food. You can get home blended foods through tube by syringe or large bore gravity bags.

Learn more

To learn more about home blended foods, check out the [Home Blended Foods for Tube Feeding](#) video series for families and related resources:

- Go to [MyHealth.Alberta.ca](https://myhealth.alberta.ca), search for [Learning about home blended food for tube feeding in children](#).

