

ONCOLOGY NUTRITION

To Unclog a Feeding Tube

1. Measure $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon (2 mL) of baking soda (sodium bicarbonate), note if using sodium bicarbonate tablets it needs to be crushed prior to measuring for use. Use a $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon (2 mL) size measure rather than a spoon used for eating. Level the teaspoon by using a knife to scrape off any overflow – do not overfill. See picture below.

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon (2 mL)



Leveling the $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon



2. Dissolve the baking soda in 15 mL warm (not hot) tap water.
3. Open one pancrelipase capsule (VIOKASE/COTAZYM) and empty contents in 15 mL warm tap water.
4. Draw up both baking soda and pancrelipase solutions into one small syringe.
5. Attach an empty syringe to the feeding tube; then draw back on plunger of syringe to decompress all air and fluid from the feeding tube. Pinch off the tube with your fingers, and discard syringe.
6. Attach syringe with baking soda and pancrelipase/baking soda to feeding tube; push plunger in to add the mixture into feeding tube.
7. Clamp the tube (or leave syringe attached to the end of feeding tube); wait 30 minutes.
8. After 30 minutes, flush the tube with 30 mL of tap water.
9. Repeat once if necessary.
10. If the blockage does not clear, and other causes of blockage (e.g. kinked tube) have been ruled out, contact your physician or go to the nearest emergency room to have the tube replaced.

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