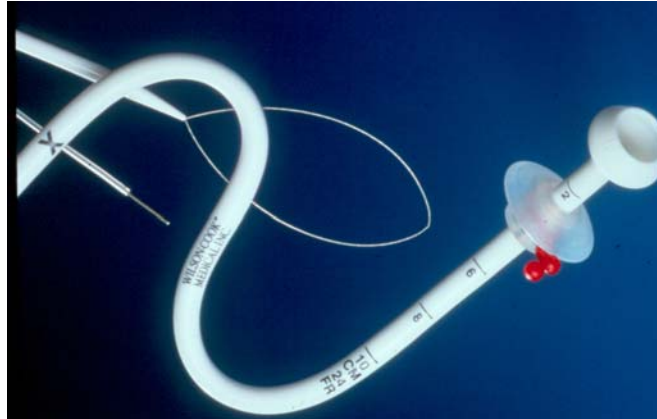
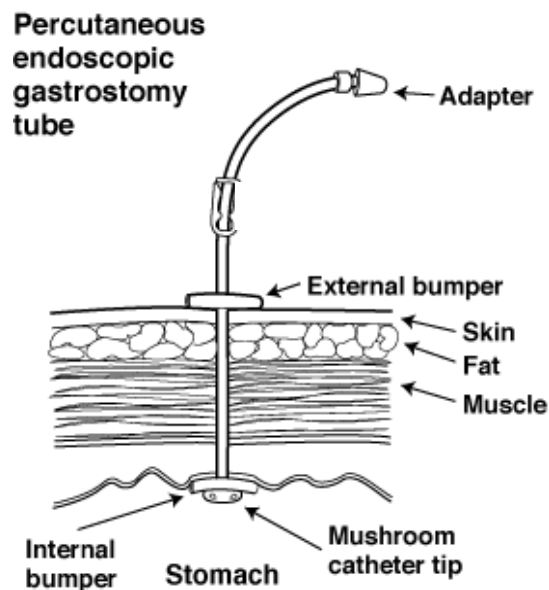


## What is a Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy (PEG)?

A PEG is a feeding tube placed through the skin, into the stomach. It is often done as an outpatient procedure. A “PEG” is a gastrostomy (a surgical opening into the stomach) made percutaneously (through the skin) using an endoscope (a flexible, lighted instrument), which is used to determine where to place the feeding tube in the stomach wall. Below is a picture of one type of PEG (**Figure 1**) and a diagram of the parts have also been labeled (**Figure 2**). Your nutritionist may also have one on hand to show you.



**Figure 1 PEG tube.** (Original picture belongs to: [www.smuhrad.nhs.uk/percutaneous\\_gastrostomy.htm](http://www.smuhrad.nhs.uk/percutaneous_gastrostomy.htm))



**Figure 2 PEG tube placed in the stomach.** (Original illustration belongs to: [www.clevelandclinic.org/health/health-info/docs/2000/2000.asp?index=4911&src=news](http://www.clevelandclinic.org/health/health-info/docs/2000/2000.asp?index=4911&src=news))

### **What is the PEG used for?**

A PEG tube is used by people who have trouble getting food from their mouth into their stomach for any reason. It can also be used if a person is unable to eat enough to remain nourished. The tube can be used for fluids to keep hydrated, nutrients to maintain strength, and medications. The feeding tube simply lets food into your stomach without having to go in the mouth and down your esophagus. Digestion continues to work the same as if you had eaten the food by mouth. Some patients are allowed to continue eating after PEG placement; a PEG does not prevent food from traveling from the mouth down into the stomach.

### **When Might it be time to consider a PEG:**

- 1) It takes too long to eat a meal and it's not fun any more.
- 2) You are coughing and choking while eating or drinking such that you or your caretakers become anxious.
- 3) Pills are too hard to swallow...literally!
- 4) Your respiratory status has been declining and your ALS team is concerned that delay in PEG placement could make the procedure too challenging in the future.
- 5) Unhealthy, unintentional weight loss that alters your strength and is concerning enough to intervene.

### **How do I get a PEG?**

If you decide to get a PEG placed, your physician will need to refer you for the procedure. At the University of Virginia Health System Digestive Health Center of Excellence, a physician's assistant (PA), who has extensive experience with feeding tubes, will review your medical history and obtain pulmonary functions tests from your respiratory therapist or pulmonologist. For safety reasons, we require some of our patients to meet with the anesthesiologist before the procedure. In addition, a nutritionist will develop an appropriate nutrition care plan for use after the PEG is placed. Once everything is in order, a date will be set for both the PEG placement and a 7-10 day post-PEG follow-up will be scheduled. The follow-up appointment will be with the PA and nutritionist to make sure the tube is working well, your nutrition plan is working, and to answer any questions you may have.

### **What will happen during the PEG placement?**

- Bring a list of current medications and any medication allergies you have.
- A physician will discuss risks of the procedure.
- Bring someone with you to drive you home. You will not be able to drive the rest of the day since you will be given sedation.
- A doctor will explain the benefits and risk of the procedure and ask you to sign a consent form before the procedure.
- You will have an IV placed in your arm for any medicine, sedation or fluids necessary during the procedure. The sedation will help you relax.
- The PEG tube will be placed through your mouth, esophagus and into your stomach. A small cut will be made and the PEG tube will be inserted.
- The procedure itself takes about 15 minutes; however, you will need to plan on being in the endoscopy area for 3-4 hours.

**What happens after PEG placement?**

- You will be given instructions by the nurse in endoscopy about how to care for your PEG site.
- A bandage will be placed over the tube site.
- You may feel some soreness at the tube site for 2-3 days.
- You may start to use the PEG tube 3 hours after it was placed.
- If you are allowed to eat food by mouth also, you may resume eating at the same time you can start using your tube (3 hours) after PEG placement unless specified otherwise by your doctor.
- You may shower 24 hours after tube placement.