

# FEEDING TUBES AND SUPPLIES ARE CHANGING



## What Consumers & Caregivers Need to Know



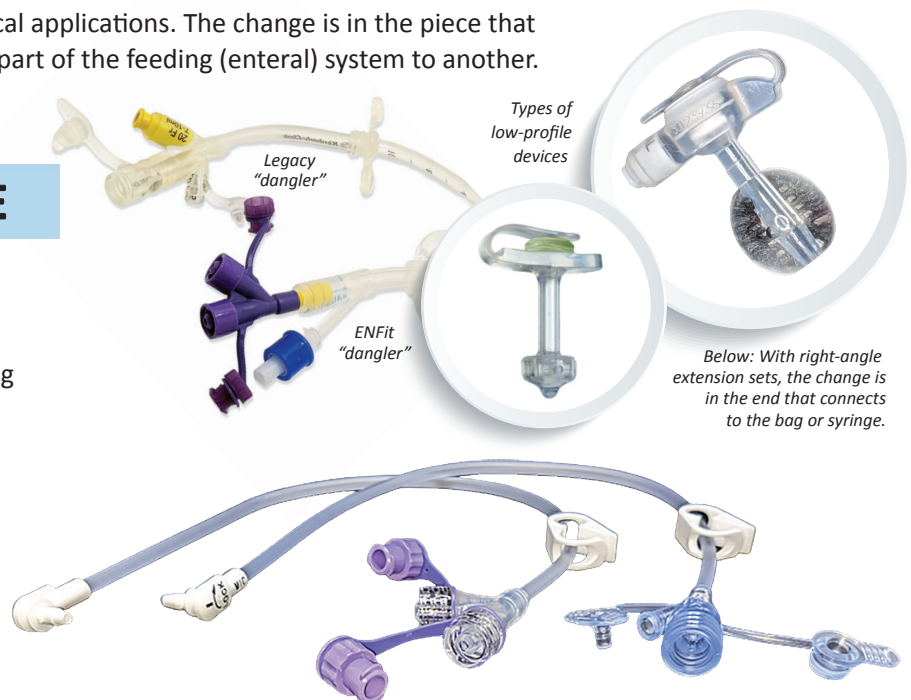
### UNDERSTAND THE CHANGE

"Connectors" are used on all types of medical tubing. A new connector, with the tradename ENFit®, has been introduced for use in the tube feeding (enteral nutrition) system—as part of the feeding tube itself, and as the connector on extension sets, syringes, feeding bags, and different accessories. ENFit is a dedicated connector that is not used in other medical applications. The change is in the piece that connects one part of the feeding (enteral) system to another.

### KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE

There are now primarily two styles of longer G-tubes, J-tubes, and G/J tubes: those with a funnel (legacy) feeding port and those with an ENFit feeding port. The port is part of the feeding tube itself, so these are called "legacy feeding tubes" and "ENFit feeding tubes." Sometimes the longer tubes are called "dangler" tubes.

Low-profile (skin-level) feeding tubes are themselves neither legacy nor ENFit. It is the low-profile extension set (right-angle or bolus) that determines if you have a legacy or ENFit connection.

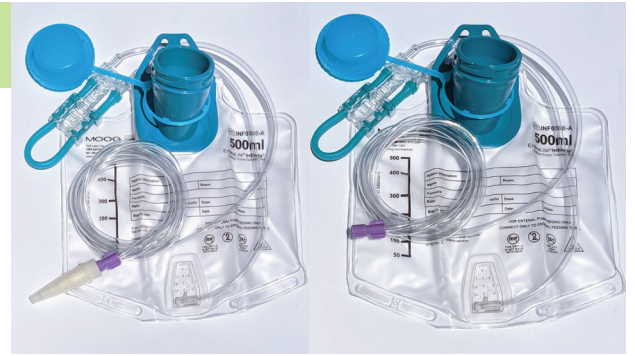


Below: With right-angle extension sets, the change is in the end that connects to the bag or syringe.

## TRANSITION CONNECTORS

Transition connectors have been created to ease the transition from legacy to ENFit. These transition, or “stepped,” connectors have been present on the end of pump and gravity feeding bags for several years now, in order to make the bags, which are already ENFit compatible, work with legacy feeding tubes. In the summer of 2022, several manufacturers stopped automatically attaching the transition connectors to the feeding bag.

In order to connect a legacy tube or extension set to an ENFit feeding bag or an ENFit syringe, you will need a transition connector. These are available as stand-alone items. You can discuss the option of having an ENFit feeding tube placed during your next in-person appointment with your healthcare provider.

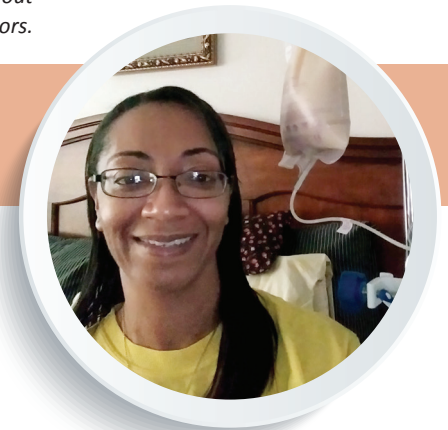


Top photo: Feeding bags, with transition connector (left) and without transition connector (right). Bottom photo: Transition connectors.

## MAKE SURE YOU RECEIVE SUPPLIES COMPATIBLE WITH YOUR FEEDING TUBE

- ▶ Confirm that any tube feeding supplies ordered for you will connect to your feeding tube port, including the type of extension sets you will receive for low-profile tubes and the medication and feeding syringes, drainage bags, extension adaptors, and Y port adaptors—anything that has to connect to your tube for feeding, flushing, or draining.
- ▶ Confirm with your homecare company or DME (the company that provides your supplies) which type of feeding tube you have—legacy or ENFit—as determined by the type of feeding tube port.
  - Take pictures of your feeding tube port and share with your homecare company so they can identify the compatible and appropriate supply needs you have.
  - Confirm or obtain the part number for your feeding tube. It will help identify whether it is legacy or ENFit.

Also, ask a dietitian or someone in the GI lab or interventional radiology (IR) department at your local hospital what type of supplies are available in the hospital, including in the emergency department. If needed, you can have backup adaptors and supplies ready to go in case of an urgent hospital visit.



## WHAT TO DO ABOUT INCOMPATIBLE SUPPLIES

What do you do when one part of your feeding tube system does not connect to another part?

- ▶ Use your emergency backup hospital supply, which you know is compatible with your tube, until compatible supplies are delivered. (See page 3.)
- ▶ Use the transition connectors or adaptors you have been saving as needed until you have the compatible supplies for your tube.





# Tips & Tricks for Success with ENFit

## WHEN GETTING A NEW ENFIT TUBE PLACED

- ▶ If the tube is placed while you are inpatient, ask to keep supplies that are used with your tube (i.e., feeding, flushing, and medication syringes).
- ▶ Any adaptors or syringes used with your feeding tube to feed, flush, and drain while you are in the hospital should be taken home with you. These may allow you to use up legacy supplies that you have at home with your new ENFit feeding tube, and may also serve as an emergency backup supply.



*Legacy syringe to ENFit tube adaptors*

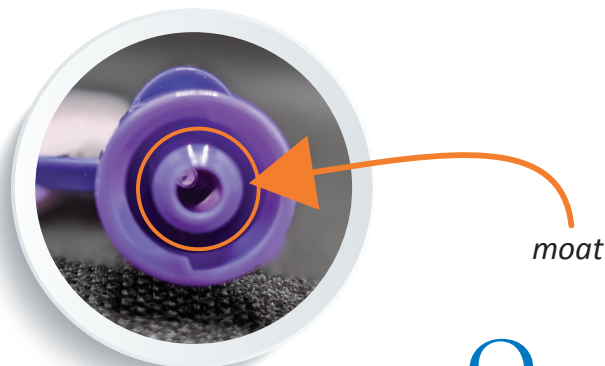
- ▶ While in the hospital, ask how to draw up medications. Bring home any supplies used to do this.
- ▶ While in the hospital, ask how to clean the new connector. Bring home any supplies used to do this.
- ▶ Do not overtighten the ENFit connector. It usually needs just a quarter-turn to be secure. If you overtighten the syringe or extension set when you are attaching them to the feeding tube and they become stuck together, the connector on the

feeding tube may crack and the feeding tube may need to be replaced.



## CLEANING AN ENFIT CONNECTOR

- ▶ See the Global Enteral Device Supplier Association (GEDSA) resource on cleaning ENFit connectors at [stayconnected.org/ENFit-cleaning-procedures-all-tubes](http://stayconnected.org/ENFit-cleaning-procedures-all-tubes).
- ▶ Check your tube connector and clean any residue before connecting.
- ▶ Avoid getting formula or medication in the threads or moat of the ENFit syringe tip or feeding tube. Here are some tips on how to do this:
  - When priming a gravity or pump feeding bag, leave a little gap of unprimed tubing so the formula doesn't drip into the moat of the ENFit connector. Wipe off any excess residue with gauze or tissue.
  - Keeping the connectors clean and dry will also help prevent the connections from becoming stuck together.
  - See also the additional tips on medication administration on page 4.



# MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION WITH ENFIT SYRINGE

- ▶ See the GEDSA resource on medication administration at [stayconnected.org/infographic-homeuse-02\\_03\\_17](http://stayconnected.org/infographic-homeuse-02_03_17).
- ▶ When drawing up medication from a medicine bottle, use an ENFit medicine bottle adaptor or a medication straw. Adaptors and medication straws should be available from the pharmacy that dispenses the medication and ENFit medication syringe.
- ▶ If bottle adaptors or medication straws are not available, a transition connector or a fill cap coupler can be used to draw up medication into an ENFit syringe. Draw up the medication into the syringe, check that the correct dose is indicated on the syringe, remove the transition connector, and administer the medication into the ENFit feeding tube. If using this method to fill the ENFit syringe for a dose to be administered into a legacy feeding tube, simply leave the transition connector in place.
- ▶ Avoid submerging the ENFit syringe tip directly into medications. If this is unavoidable, tap excess medication out of the moat of the syringe after filling the syringe.
- ▶ To administer crushed pills:
  - Dissolve crushed pills well in a cup with a convenient amount of water and then draw up into an ENFit syringe.
  - It may be difficult to draw up tiny pieces of a crushed pill into an ENFit syringe (especially low-dose-tip ENFit syringes). For pills that do not dissolve well, use a heavy-duty pill crusher.
  - If difficulty with crushing or administering certain pills continues, talk to your provider about options for obtaining the medication already diluted by the pharmacy.
  - Note: Not all medications can be safely crushed. See the list called Oral Dosage Forms That Should Not Be Crushed on the Institute for Safe Medication Practices' website ([ismp.org/recommendations/do-not-crush](http://ismp.org/recommendations/do-not-crush)). Check with a pharmacist when in doubt.

ENFit medication bottle adaptors



Fill cap coupler (left) and transition connector (right) being used to withdraw medications into ENFit syringes from bottles that have legacy bottle adaptors.



Left to right: standard ENFit tip syringe; ENFit low-dose-tip syringe; Luer lock (IV) syringe.

## VENTING AND DRAINING

- ▶ The experience of venting and draining a G-tube varies from person to person. Some people have more success with a “dangler” tube than with a low-profile device for this purpose. The smaller the French size and inner diameter of the tube, the more difficult the drainage may be, regardless of connector type.
- ▶ If you find you vent or drain better through a legacy tube, talk to your provider about maintaining a legacy tube and supplies. If you find it difficult to obtain legacy supplies, talk to your homecare company about obtaining transition connectors to connect ENFit supplies to your legacy tube.
- ▶ Venting and drainage bags with ENFit connections are available. Ask your healthcare team how to obtain these.
- ▶ Extension sets that have an ENFit medication port and a legacy drainage port are available for low-profile G-tubes. These are often referred to as “hybrid feed sets.”



Left port: Legacy drainage port

Right port: ENFit medication port



**CONTENT REVIEWED BY:** Manpreet Mundi, MD, Oley Foundation Science and Medicine Advisor; Amy Braglia-Tarpey, MS, RD, CNSC, Oley Foundation Director of Education and Initiatives; Jennifer Bonvechio, PharmD, BCPPS; Ben Davis, medical device engineer and GEDSA Executive Director; Barbara Fleming, MS, APN Clinical Nurse Specialist, member GEDSA Clinical Advisory Board; Beth Lyman, RN, Co-chair GEDSA Clinical Advisory Board; Cynthia Reddick, RD, CNSC, member GEDSA Clinical Advisory Board, member Oley New Connectors Working Group; Elizabeth Vondriska, Applied Medical Technology, Inc. Our thanks to the Oley Foundation members who allowed us to use their photos.

*Some images generously provided by GEDSA. Some images generously provided by Applied Medical Technology, Inc. (AMT).*

*This is not intended to provide medical advice or to recommend a course of treatment. All suggestions should be discussed with your healthcare provider prior to actual use.*