A new, practical and informative guide to bolus feeding has been launched by Nutricia in response to requests from healthcare professionals, as this form of feeding is becoming more frequently used in clinical practice.

**Bolus Feeding in Adults: A Practical Guide** is aimed at all healthcare professionals involved in the enteral feeding of patients. It has been developed by 15 healthcare professionals with experience and expertise in enteral tube feeding, including nutrition nurse specialists, specialist dietitians and a nutrition pharmacist. It has been endorsed by the National Nurses Nutrition Group (NNNG), British Dietetic Association (BDA), British Association of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (BAPEN) and British Pharmaceutical Nutrition Group (BPNG).

Bolus feeding is a method of tube feeding which has evolved and grown more prevalent in recent years (Simons et al, 2016) in response to the preferences and needs of individual patients and carers, as well as their social circumstances and the experience of the healthcare professionals caring for them. A recent survey of bolus feeding practices in the UK reported that one-third of patients receiving home enteral feeding were receiving part or all of their nutrition via bolus feeding (Simons et al, 2016). However, despite this widespread use of bolus feeding, there is a limited evidence base to inform its practice.

The aim of the new guide is to provide knowledge to those who are less familiar with the practice of bolus feeding and to further enhance the capabilities of those who require it. The ultimate aim is to provide patients with a technique that best suits their needs.

Bolus feeding can be very advantageous for some patients, giving them greater flexibility and independence. However, it does not suit all patients and this guide aims to assist healthcare professionals in taking a patient-centred approach to making the decision to bolus feed or not. It also gives useful advice on the different methods that can be used to bolus feed.

**Bolus Feeding in Adults: A Practical Guide** includes a definition of bolus feeding and a summary of the advantages and disadvantages of bolus feeding for different patients. It outlines considerations relating to the duration and flexibility of bolus feeding, as well as reviewing the potential advantages and disadvantages relating to nutritional, practical, technical, social and safety matters.

Also included is a list of patient-centred considerations to discuss with the patient and/or their carer to determine whether bolus feeding is the correct route of feeding for them, along with a list of potential bolus feeding pros and cons for patients with specific conditions, such as head and neck cancer, stroke and neurodegenerative conditions.

It then looks at ways to optimise the bolus feeding regimen once this method of feeding has been agreed upon. This also provides advice on volume and frequency of feeds, the starter regimen, hydration, nutritional completeness and method of administration. It aims to ensure that the bolus feeding regimen agreed upon is patient-centred and meets nutritional, lifestyle and clinical needs. The final chapter in the guide reviews the available methods of administration in more detail, giving advice on administration of bolus via plunger, gravity or pump. It gives details of equipment required and outlines the steps that need to be considered for each method.

It is hoped that this practical guide will empower nurses to review current policies and procedures in bolus feeding to support education of peers, patients and their carers on the practice of bolus feeding.

**REFERENCE**


**Resources**

- Free copies of Bolus Feeding in Adults: A Practical Guide can be downloaded via: www.bolusfeeding.co.uk
- Printed copies are also available free via the Nutricia Resource Centre: resourcecentre@nutricia.com