



## Westover Veterinary Centre

Hornbeam Business Park

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# Oesophageal tube feeding and management

## Preparing the food:

The food you use for each meal must be at room temperature prior to giving it to your dog. Not too hot and not too cold.

The best way to warm the food is to leave it out of the fridge for 30–60 minutes prior to use. You could also warm it up in a water bath but make sure that the water is at room temperature.

Please **avoid using the microwave** to warm the food.

## Preparing to feed:

Have your required materials ready before you begin the feed. You will need: an empty syringe, a syringe filled with 5ml of water, the syringes containing the food.

1. Ensure that the tube is still in its intended position in the side of your pet's neck. You can do this by taking a look under the bandage and checking that the stitches are still intact and check that the tube is still attached to the skin. The length of tube that is visible should be the same as per the last inspection (not appearing longer or shorter than previously). **If the tube doesn't look right or has dislodged, please give us a call.**
2. Position your dog so that they are sitting up and awake so that they don't choke on food and can swallow comfortably.





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3. Take the cap off the end of the tube and attach an **empty syringe** to it to check for negative pressure. To do that, draw back the syringe and watch to see if it sucks back down. If it doesn't and fills with air, there may be a leakage in the tube or opening. (If this happens, give us a call) Once you have established that negative pressure is present, you can continue.

### Feeding:

1. Attach a **syringe filled with water** to the tube and begin to slowly press down to feed water down the tube. Flush through about 5ml of water and watch that it moves normally through the tube while noting your pet's reaction. Watch for coughing or distress.
2. Now swap to your syringe filled with your pet's food and begin to slowly push down on the plunger. Normally, you will administer the food over about 15 to 20 minutes. **If there's any coughing or regurgitation**, stop the feeding and give us a call.
3. Once the instructed volume of food has been given, you must flush the tube again with water to ensure that there are no pieces of food stuck inside it. This ensures that no food will dry and block the tube which might prevent future use. Flush through a total of five mls of water after the feed.
4. Once you're satisfied with the cleanliness of the tube, disconnect the syringe and put the cap back onto the end. Tuck the tube back under the collar or bandage to secure it until the next use.

### Checking and dressing the wound:

A common issue when using an oesophageal feeding tube is irritation surrounding the wound which can sometimes become infected.





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You should check this area at least once a day and give the wound a clean with some dilute hibiscrub.

You should also change the bandage once a day initially and potentially every few days as the healing continues.

**If the wound is producing a yellow/green discharge, smells, or looks inflamed,** please give us a call.

