



[cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org) | 1.800.227.2345

Tubes, Catheters, and Drains Used in Cancer Treatment and Care

Tubes or drains may be used during or after cancer treatment. Not everyone will need a tube or drain. If you do, your cancer care team will teach you how to care for it.

- [Oxygen tubes](#)
- [Tubes to give liquid nourishment or medicine](#)
- [Tubes to drain fluids from the body](#)

Some common tubes and drains used in cancer treatment are:

- Oxygen tubes
- Tubes to give liquid nourishment (food or feedings) or medicine
- Tubes to drain fluids from the body

Oxygen tubes

You may be given oxygen if your levels are low. Oxygen can be given through a tube placed under the nose (called a **nasal cannula**) or a mask that goes over the mouth and nose. Tubing connects the cannula or mask to an oxygen tank or oxygen concentrator. Ask your cancer care team if you need oxygen equipment that you can travel with.

It's important to follow the oxygen safety instructions. Make sure you know how to care for the tank and other equipment.

Never let anyone smoke or use fire, including candles and gas stoves, in areas

where oxygen is being used.

Tubes to give liquid nourishment or medicine

Liquid nourishment (food or feedings) or medicine may be given through a tube placed in the stomach or the small intestine (bowel). They are often called tube feedings.

- If feedings are needed for a short time, a tube can be put in through the nose and into the stomach (called a **nasogastric tube**, or **NG tube**) or small intestine (called a **nasojejunal tube**, or **NJ tube**) without needing surgery.
- If feedings are needed for a longer time, surgery might be done to place a feeding tube through the skin of the belly and into the stomach (called a **gastrostomy tube**, or **G tube**) or the small intestine (called a **jejunostomy tube**, or **J tube**).

These tubes can be used to give feedings, medicines, and fluids. They (or)Tjcan 0 0 0 rg /GS66 gs 1

Written by

The American Cancer Society medical and editorial content team
(<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/acs-medical-content-and-news-staff.html>)

Our team is made up of doctors and oncology certified nurses with deep knowledge of cancer care as well as editors and translators with extensive experience in medical writing.

American Cancer Society medical information is copyrighted material. For reprint requests, please see our Content Usage Policy (www.cancer.org/about-us/policies/content-usage.html).

cancer.org | 1.800.227.2345