

Gastric Fluid Leak

Some gastrostomy tubes and devices can leak intermittently. This isn't always gastric fluid and may not cause problems. However, this should be evaluated by a health care professional.

Common problems related to gastric fluid leak with possible causes and recommended options for management are included in *Table 12 below*.



Gastric fluid leak
PHOTO: A Kennedy

Table 12: Gastric fluid leak

Problem	Possible causes	Options for Management
Balloon is not inflated enough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valve failure • Pin-hole in the balloon • Volume loss by osmosis • Balloon inflation volume not as per manufacturers guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular checking of the balloon fill and valve competency • Refer to manufacturers guidelines • Consider high volume balloon
Balloon rupture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accidental balloon over fill • Inappropriate access to balloon port • Age of device • Yeast colonisation • Product fault 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace the device
Gastrostomy position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site too close to the pylorus • Conditions where the relative positions of the stomach and the stoma tract change (e.g. worsening scoliosis) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review enteral tube feeding regimen - consider reducing volume and increasing bolus frequency or transition from bolus to continuous • Review device type and consider change of brand or to a tube/device with different features of the internal bumper for less interference with the gastric outlet • If not resolved, medical review; consider re-siting
Inadequate stoma seal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight loss or patient growth • Poor device fit and/or correct device fit not maintained • Movement of device by external forces (e.g. wheelchair straps, belts, clothing etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dietetic review and consider change in tube feeding regimen • Assess stoma seal - review the fit and condition of the existing device. Consider over filling of the balloon within manufacturer's device specifications. Adjust or replace the device as appropriate • Note the external flange should move away from the skin by a few millimetres when traction is applied to the device • Patient/carer education
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased intra-abdominal pressure (coughing, straining to open bowels, retching) • Infection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical review • Manage constipation if present • Consider venting of the gastrostomy (See page 40)
Poor gastric emptying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gastroparesis associated with conditions including but not limited to Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, diabetes mellitus, idiopathic.¹⁴² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider regular prokinetics • If not resolved, medical review; consider post-pyloric feeding.¹⁴²