

October 2025

Guidance note for the safe prescribing of Home Enteral Tube Feeds for Adults & Children

This guidance note applies to healthcare professionals, including GPs, Nurses, Pharmacists, Dietitians Dispensing Contractors and Enteral Tube Feed providers to enable safe and appropriate prescribing and supply of Enteral Tube Feeds. This guidance does not refer to Oral Nutritional Supplements (Sip Feeds). It is underpinned by [NICE clinical guideline \[CG32\] Nutrition support for adults: oral nutrition support, enteral tube feeding and parenteral nutrition](#) and the NHS London Procurement Programme's [Best-practice-for-the-provision-of-nutrition-supply-services.pdf](#).

Enteral Tube Feeding (ETF) is classified as a medical treatment and has risks and benefits associated with its use. It is prescribed by appropriate healthcare prescribers to meet the nutritional requirements for patients who cannot achieve adequate nutrition from food and/or for those who are unable to eat or drink safely. ETF is mostly initiated by specialist dietetic services in NHS Trusts or Community Health Services with ongoing prescribing continued by primary care prescribers in General Practice.

When ETF is being initiated, obtaining patients consent for their choice of Dispensing Contractor (Community Pharmacy or Home Care Service Pharmacy) to supply their Enteral Feed is essential and this should be documented in their clinical notes. Supplies of ETF could be sourced through the patient's nominated Dispensing contractor (Community Pharmacy or Home Care Service Pharmacy). Patients are entitled to decide where they want to receive their prescribed medical treatments (including ETF) from. Therefore, in line with the NHS Constitution, patients should request their repeat prescriptions to be dispensed by their nominated dispensing contractor. The patient's preference must be honoured.

The provision of care, feeding supplies and information to ETF patients is complex and multifactorial, and involves several health care professionals and partner organisations. Therefore, effective collaboration between all healthcare professionals involved is essential. Feeding pumps and consumables (e.g. plastics and possibly ancillaries) associated with enteral tube feeding are supplied by the manufacturers of Enteral Feeds/associated Homecare Services. Teams of dietetic services, specialist clinicians, primary care clinicians (General Practice) and Dispensing Contractors need to collaborate to deliver comprehensive quality care to patients.

The nomination of a Dispensing Contractor must be the patient's choice and should not be changed without their consent. As with all treatments prescribed (medicines and devices) repeatedly via FP10 prescriptions, patients should be encouraged to manage the process of requesting repeat prescriptions through the NHS App or via an appropriate ordering process.

Title	Guidance note for the safe prescribing of Home Enteral Tube Feeds for Adults & Children	Version No: 1.1
Authors	Bola Sotubo, Lead Medicines Optimisation Pharmacist, Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation Team NHS North East London Abigail Pearson BSc (Hons) RD, LLM (Healthcare Ethics and Law), Community Adult Home Enteral Tube Feeding Dietitian, Barts Health NHS Trust	
Consulted with	North East London Dietetic Services	
Approved by	Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation Senior Leadership Team	Review date: 13.04.2026
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GP practices should issue electronic prescriptions via Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) to the patient's nominated Dispensing Contractor. This enables a standardised approach which also facilitates the tracking of prescriptions.

In primary care Enteral Tube Feeding products should only be supplied on receipt of an FP10 prescription, therefore practices are advised not to issue retrospective prescriptions after a supply has been made. Dispensing contractors are advised not to supply feeds without the prescription being issued by the appropriate prescriber from patients' registered Practice. There is no legal requirement for a prescriber in General Practice/primary care to issue prescriptions retrospectively for products that have already been supplied.

The benefits of EPS include:

- Prescribers can process prescriptions more efficiently and an audit trail of all prescriptions issued and dispensed is available. There is no need to post prescriptions thereby saving time.
- Electronic prescriptions can't be lost, reducing the risk of duplicate prescriptions being created.
- Prescribers use a standardised drug dictionary to complete electronic prescriptions, improving prescription accuracy and reducing the risk of patients receiving the wrong medication.
- Prescriptions can be cancelled at any time until they have been dispensed, and replacements can be sent electronically.
- Electronic prescriptions enable the dispenser to prepare prescriptions in advance, reducing waiting time for patients and ensuring stock is available.
- Prescribers can add messages to electronic prescriptions, allowing dispensers to communicate the messages to patients.

NHS Digital has published information about the benefits of EPS for prescribers and dispensers.

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Actions for healthcare professionals

Prescribing Information for General Practice

- Ensure the patients choice of Dispensing Contractor is documented in the patient's notes.
- Prescriptions should be issued at the right intervals for the appropriate quantities and duration e.g. monthly.
- Practices must avoid issuing retrospective prescriptions for Enteral Feeds i.e. issuing prescriptions for feeds after they have been delivered to patients' homes except in emergency situations. Emergency supplies should be limited to one-week supply.
- In exceptional/emergency situations (as a one-off), a bridging prescription for a limited supply (e.g. 7 days) may be issued via EPS following a discussion with the patient/carer, their GP/Clinical Pharmacist/Practice Nurse, dietitian and the Dispensing Contractor. The Dispensing Contractor and the General Practice should re-instate regular monthly prescriptions and dispensing thereafter.
- Prescriptions to the Dispensing Contractor should only be sent via EPS to enable tracking of issued and dispensed prescriptions.
- Encourage patients/carers to use the [NHS App](#) as much as possible to manage and request their repeat prescriptions. This reduces the need for third party requests by Dispensing Contractors.
- Regular reviews of patient's nutritional needs by dieticians associated with patient's nutritional care should be integrated into patients' care.
- Avoid delays in issuing prescriptions as this could result in delays to patient's feeding and the increased risk of:
 - Dehydration
 - Decline of malnutrition
 - Possible patient hospitalisation/increased risk of re-admission or need of emergency care
 - Adverse significant events if routine insulin has been administered
 - Distress to patients/carers/parents
 - Increased costs due to emergency supplies and duplication of prescriptions
- Patients' clinical records should be annotated with an alert/pop-up message about where Enteral Feed prescriptions are to be dispensed e.g. name of the patient's nominated Community Pharmacy, or Homecare Service. Ensure that the patient's usual EPS nomination remains unchanged.

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Contact Information

North East London Dietetic Services

Barts Health NHS Trust	Barts Health Nutrition Prescribing (Adults and Paediatrics)	bhnt.nutritionprescribing@nhs.net 07950 854 911 Monday-Friday
	Adult Dietetic Teams Mile End Hospital, Bancroft Road, London, E1 4DG	Community Nutrition Support and Home Enteral Feeding BHNT.THdietitians@nhs.net Tel: 0208 223 8749 Monday-Friday, 08:30-16:30
	Paediatric Dietetic Teams	Paediatric home enteral feeding team bartshealth.tmailboxpaedheftdietitians@nhs.net 07950 854 911
Homerton Healthcare	0207 683 4267	huh-tr.adulthetfteam@nhs.net
North East London Foundation Trust	Barking & Dagenham Dietitians Porters Avenue Health Centre 234 Porters Avenue, Dagenham, RM2 8EQ	Tel: 0300 300 1769 Team account & Referrals: bddietitians@nelft.nhs.uk
	Havering Dietitians Harold Wood Clinic, 24 Gubbins Lane, Harold Wood, RM3 0QA	Tel: 0300 300 1783 Referrals: nelft.haveringreferrals@nelft.nhs.uk Team account: haveringdietitians@nelft.nhs.uk
	Redbridge Dietitians Hainault Health Centre Manford Way, Chigwell IG7 4DF	Tel: 0300 300 1889 Team account: Redbridge.adultsdietitians@nelft.nhs.uk Referrals: nem-tr.nelftred.saltanddieteticreferrals@nhs.net
	Waltham Forest Chingford Health Centre 109 York Road,	Tel: 020 8430 8090 ext 78045 Email: walthamforestdietitians@nelft.nhs.uk

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	London, E4 8LF	
Homecare services		
NHS Trust	Homecare service	Aligned Borough/Place
Barts Health and Homerton Healthcare	Home - Fresenius Kabi Great Britain (fresenius-kabi.com) Pharmacy Support Calea	Newham, Tower Hamlets and City & Hackney
North East London Foundation Trust	Nutricia and Nutricia Homeward team Abbott.co.uk	Barking & Dagenham, Havering, Redbridge Waltham forest
Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation Team, NHS North East London ICB Generic Mailbox for Prescribing Queries: nelondonicb.prescribingqueries@nhs.net North East London Community Pharmacies PCNS.xlsx (live.com)		

Please continue to record suspected adverse drug reactions to the [Yellow Card scheme](#).
Please continue to record medicine patient safety incidents to [Learning From Patient Safety Events](#)

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