



# HOME TUBE FEEDING PROGRAM

## FOR BABIES USING A LONG-TERM FEEDING TUBE

Your baby may be eligible to go home supported by the Home Tube Feeding Program. This information sheet will tell you more about what happens while your baby is on the program.

### About the Home Tube Feeding Program

The program aims to support parents to care for their baby(s) at home while they are transitioning to a home tube feeding program managed by The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) or Monash Children's Hospital (MCH). The program at these hospitals is an outpatient service known as the Home Enteral Nutrition (HEN) program.

Even though your baby will go home with a feeding tube it does not necessarily mean that they will need to move to the HEN program; transitioning to this program, if necessary, will be discussed with you and your baby are at the Women's.

The Home Tube Feeding Program is set up to help babies who:

- are transitioning to full sucking breast or bottle feeds
- need to use a long-term tube feeding at home.

To be eligible for home tube feeding babies will need to be:

- medically stable
- 1.8 kg or more at transfer to home
- able to maintain temperature in an open cot
- consistently gaining weight (around 10-15 grams per day)
- at least 35-36 weeks gestation
- approved for transfer home by the healthcare team caring for your baby
- discharged home from NICU at the Women's.

### Preparing families to go home

To prepare families for the transfer to home parents will need to:

- watch at least three tube feeding demonstrations by staff
- give at least three tube feeds with staff support
- give at least a minimum of three tube feeds independent from staff
- know how to remove the fluid from the feeding tube and check it is clean and ready for use
- know how to prepare and replace fresh tapes which hold the tube in place.

Parents will also receive an information sheet which explains how to check tube position when their baby is at home.

If baby needs any infant formula, parent/s must have education on how to prepare infant formula before transfer to home.

If baby is breastfeeding before discharge to home, parents will have an appointment with a lactation consultant to set up a feeding plan. Families will have a follow-up appointment with a lactation consultant five days after transfer to home.

### What support is available for families at home?

A Neonatal Hospital in the Home (NHITH) nurse will frequently visit families at home until they are accepted onto a HEN program.

During the home visit the NHITH nurse will weigh the baby and offer families support and advice about how to use the feeding tube.

Families will be under the care of NHITH until the baby is accepted onto a HEN program and has their first appointment.

Transfer to a HEN program will be arranged by the NICU healthcare team. Once on a HEN program babies are discharged from NHITH and their care will be managed by the Neonatal Medicine team at RCH or MCH.

**NHITH phone support is available 24 hrs a day.**

### More about the HEN program

The HEN program is a service managed by RCH and MCH. It supports families and babies that need long term tube feeding.

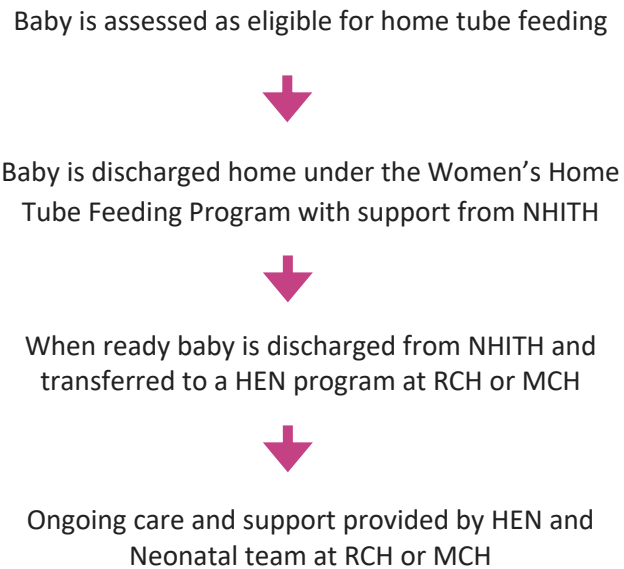
If your baby is to be transferred to a HEN program the Women's NHITH will arrange an appointment for your baby to be seen by the paediatric doctors at RCH or MCH. An appointment will also be made for you and your baby to meet with the HEN program team. After these appointments your baby will be discharged from the NHITH program.

As a patient of a HEN program, your baby's ongoing care and feeding tube management will be provided by the medical and allied health services at RCH or MCH.

**NOTE:** If your baby's feeding tube is accidentally pulled out whilst still under the care of NHITH, families must contact NHITH on the phone number provided for assistance and may need to return to the NICU nursery to have a new one put in.

Once transferred to a HEN program, families will need to contact the hospital where their baby is a patient for assistance.

### A step by step guide



### For more information

Your baby's doctor, nurse or care manager are available to answer your questions.

#### **Newborn Intensive Care Unit**

Royal Women's Hospital  
Cnr Flemington Rd and Grattan St  
Parkville VIC 3052  
T: (03) 8345 3400

#### **Neonatal Hospital in the Home**

T: 0418 501 253 (Phone support line)  
8am to 4pm  
After hours: (03) 8345 3493