



Parenteral nutrition

Information for patients from the Dietetic Team

This leaflet aims to give you a better understanding of parenteral nutrition (PN). If you still have questions after reading this, please talk to your doctor, dietitian, or a member of staff.

What is parenteral nutrition (PN)?

PN is a way of providing nutrients when you are unable to eat. Instead of food being taken by mouth and absorbed from your gut, it is given straight into your blood stream.

Why do I need to be fed like this?

You may have had a procedure that needs you to rest your gut, or your medical condition means that you are not absorbing all the nutrients you need. PN provides the nutrients that your body needs during this period.

How will I be fed the parenteral nutrition?

PN is given straight into your bloodstream, through a dedicated line (drip) into your vein. This area must be kept clean and the same line will be used every day.

The bag of PN will be fed into the line using a pump.

What does parenteral nutrition contain?

The bag contains a mixture of glucose (for energy), protein (for repair of body tissue), fat (another energy source), vitamins, and minerals (essential for body functions, such as healing).

PN is usually cream coloured and must always be covered with a bag; this is to stop the breakdown of certain nutrients by daylight.

Can I eat or drink?

It may be possible for you to eat or drink, but you need to check with your doctors first.

Will I feel hungry?

Even though you are being given all the nutrients that your body needs, there may still be times when you feel hungry. This is normal, but make sure you tell your medical team / dietitian.

How long do I have to have parenteral nutrition for?

This depends on your medical condition; it should be continued until you are able to tolerate nutrition through your gut. Most patients have PN for five to seven days, though it can be given for longer periods if needed.

PN is usually given continuously as a 24 hour infusion. After speaking with your dietitian, the infusion time may be reduced.

What else should I know?

If you feel dizzy, have palpitations (your heartbeat becomes more noticeable), or you become hot and sweaty, tell your nurse / doctor immediately.

Whilst on PN you will have regular observations (such as temperature, blood glucose monitoring, and pulse), regular blood tests, and your weight will be checked at least each week (or more often if requested by your dietitian).

The Nutrition Nursing Team will review patients on PN weekly and offer support to patients and ward teams.

Contact details

For further information, please contact the Dietetic Team on:

- **Kent and Canterbury Hospital**, Canterbury
Telephone: 01227 864236
- **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital**, Margate
Telephone: 01843 234310
- **William Harvey Hospital**, Ashford
Telephone: 01233 616624

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 783145 (tel://+441227783145), or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net (ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)

Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals website (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/information-for-patients/patient-information/>).

Reference number: RK/EKH135

First published:
April 2012

Last reviewed:
June 2023

Next review date:
October 2026

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