

Artificial Nutrition

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

FACT SHEET

Artificial nutrition allows you to receive food and water by tubes if you are unable to eat or drink on your own. This fact sheet can help you decide if you want to try artificial nutrition. The time to make this choice is when you feel well and have the facts you need.



Ask questions and talk to your doctor and others. Think about what is meaningful in your life and what you need to make life worth living.

Artificial nutrition may or may not be a good choice for you. There may be side effects. The doctor who knows you best can help you make the decision.



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WHAT IS artificial nutrition?

Artificial nutrition methods include:

- A tube put through your nose into your stomach,
- A tube put through your belly into your stomach, or
- An IV tube put into your vein.

Food and water are slowly and gently pumped through these tubes.

MAKING THE decision about artificial nutrition

Artificial nutrition may or may not be a good choice for you.

Artificial nutrition is most effective if:

- You are generally healthy.
- You need artificial nutrition for a short time to recover from surgery or sudden illness.

Artificial nutrition is not as effective if:

- Your body is weak from chronic health problems.
- You have an illness that can no longer be treated.
- You are older and very weak.

Artificial nutrition can have these side effects:

- Food can spill into your lungs and cause infection.
- If your body is not working well, it can't use food and water, and fluids can build up, causing pain.

Your hands may need to be tied down so you don't pull the feeding tube out.

You should talk to your doctor about these side effects.



IF YOU WANT to try artificial nutrition

Talk to your doctor and family about what you would want them to do if your health continues to get worse or you are unable to think or speak for yourself. Would there be a point at which you would want to stop artificial nutrition?

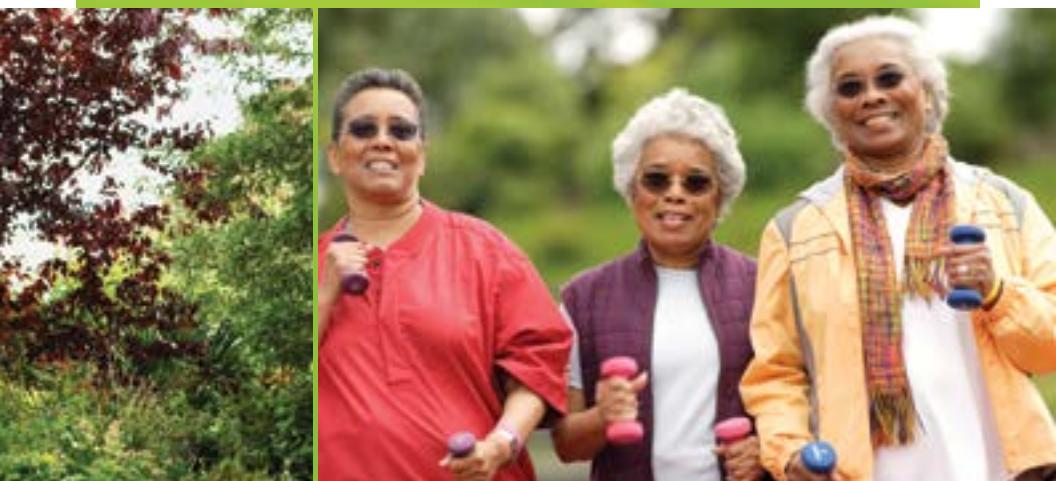
IF YOU DECIDE you do not want artificial nutrition

In this situation you may have fears about not getting food or water. You may think you will feel extreme hunger or be uncomfortable. This is not true. You will not feel hungry. You may have a dry mouth and a sense of thirst. You will be given good mouth care and ice chips to help. There are many choices you can make to help you live as well as possible and be comfortable.

If you do not want to try artificial nutrition, you need to tell your doctor and family. Plans can be made that follow your wishes.

For more information you can go to kp.org/lifecareplan or contact your local Health Education department.





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