

Parenteral Nutrition

Information for patients

This leaflet is to help you have a greater understanding of Parenteral Nutrition (PN). If you still have questions after reading, 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 via a dedicated line. 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 in appearance and must always be covered with a bag; this is to prevent the breakdown of certain nutrients by daylight.

Can I eat or drink?

This depends on several factors. It may be possible to eat or drink, but you need to check with your doctors first.



Will I feel hungry?

Even though you are being provided with all the nutrients that your body needs there may still be periods that you experience a feeling of hunger.

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 discussion with your dietitian infusion time may be reduced.

What else should I know?

If you feel dizzy, experience palpitations, or 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 twice weekly weights to monitor your progress.

Contact details

For further information contact the Dietetic Team on:

- Kent and Canterbury Hospital, Canterbury
Telephone: 01227 86 42 36
- William Harvey Hospital, Ashford
Telephone: 01233 61 66 24
- Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital, Margate
Telephone: 01843 23 43 10

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 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring in 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 had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation