

# ENTERAL VS. PARENTERAL

## THE DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN ENTERAL AND PARENTERAL NUTRITION

All people need food in order to survive. Sometimes, due to illness, surgery, or other reasons, individuals are unable to get the nutrition their bodies require. It then becomes necessary for these individuals to receive nutrition through alternative methods. These methods are categorized as Enteral or Parenteral Nutrition

### ENTERAL NUTRITION

When patients have problems with eating or digestion, it is sometimes necessary to provide nutrition via an alternative route with food which is specially formulated to provide the right balance of fats, proteins, sugars, vitamins and minerals. Enteral feeding is the delivery of a special liquid food mixture through a feeding tube into the stomach or small intestine.

#### Delivery Location

Enteral nutrition can be given through different types of tubes. Tubes can be placed through the nose, into the stomach, or even directly into the small intestine.



#### Delivery Mechanism

Enteral nutrition can be delivered using gravity drip bags, syringes, enteral feeding pumps, or even by using a combination of methods.



#### Who Gets Enteral Nutrition?

People of all age, from infants, to young children, to adults, can be given enteral nutrition. Enteral nutrition can be administered as long as it is needed. When it is no longer needed, the patient's feeding tube is removed.



#### Statistics

According to Nationwide Inpatient Survey (NIS) statistics, patients received enteral feeding in over 250,000 hospital stays. It is estimated that over 400,000 patients receive enteral nutrition at home.

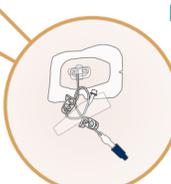


### PARENTERAL NUTRITION

It is generally preferable to use enteral nutrition, but there are times when that is not possible. When a person is not able to receive enough calories or cannot adequately absorb nutrients through the gut, nutrition can be given directly into the bloodstream. Parenteral nutrition is a sterile liquid chemical formula given directly into the bloodstream through an intravenous (IV) catheter.

#### Delivery Location

Parenteral nutrition can be irritating to small veins, therefore it is often delivered through a central catheter. A central catheter is a long tube which may be inserted in the arm or chest. The end of the catheter is located in the large blood vessel above the heart.



#### Delivery Mechanism

Parenteral nutrition requires slow and controlled delivery using either a pole mounted or ambulatory infusion pump.



#### Who Gets Parenteral Nutrition?

Parenteral nutrition is administered to people of all ages, infants through adults. People can live on parenteral nutrition for as long as necessary, and it is discontinued when no longer medically necessary.



#### Statistics

According to the 2014 National Inpatient Survey data, patients received short-term parenteral nutrition in over 290,000 hospital stays. It is estimated that about 25,000 patients receive parenteral at home.



Both enteral and parenteral nutrition delivery can be safely delivered while at home. Dietitians, nurses, pharmacists, and home care companies can teach patients how to safely prepare and administer nutrition delivery at home.



Patients are typically able to receive enteral or parenteral nutrition while at school. Working closely with the patient's medical team, school administrators and school nurses will help ensure a safe and successful educational experience while on nutritional support therapy.



Depending on the degree of disease and symptoms a patient is experiencing, he or she is often able to work while receiving either enteral and parenteral nutrition.



Physical activity is often encouraged for patients receiving both enteral and parenteral nutrition therapy. Patient's should work closely with their medical team to identify which activities are appropriate for their specific situation.



### AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Numerous resources are available to assist patients and caregivers better understand both enteral and parenteral nutrition. Organizations and online support communities exist to help individuals navigate the complexities surrounding nutrition therapy. A few resources are identified below.



The Oley Foundation is a national, independent, non-profit organization that strives to enrich the lives of those living with home intravenous nutrition (parenteral) and tube feeding (enteral) through education, advocacy, and networking. The Foundation serves as a resource for consumer's families, clinicians and industry representatives, and other interested parties. Learn more at <https://oley.org/>.

### American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition

ASPEN is dedicated to improving patient care by advancing the science and practice of clinical nutrition and metabolism. ASPEN is a community of dietitians, nurses, pharmacists, physicians, scientists, students, and other health professionals from every facet of nutrition support clinical practice, research, and education. Learn more by visiting <https://www.nutritioncare.org/>.



The mission of the Feeding Tube Awareness Foundation is to help other parents by sharing practical experience tube-feeding infants and children. They aim to raise positive awareness of tube feeding so that families have the support they need. The organization is run 100% by exceptional parent volunteers who combine their personal experience and professional knowledge. Learn more by visiting <https://www.feedingtubeawareness.org/>.

