### Preparation and storage of feeds
- Feeds should be stored according to manufacturers’ instructions and, where applicable, food hygiene legislation.

### Administration of feeds
- Minimal handling and an aseptic non-touch technique should be used to connect the feed container administration system and enteral feeding tube.

### Care of insertion site and enteral feeding tube
- The stoma should be washed daily with water and dried thoroughly.
- The enteral feeding tube should be flushed with fresh tap water before and after feeding or administering medications. Enteral feeding tubes for patients who are immuno-suppressed should be flushed with either cooled freshly boiled water or sterile water from a freshly opened container.
- Education of patients/clients, their carers and healthcare personnel should be integral to all risk elements.

### Preventing the spread of infection
- Refer to the Essential steps to safe, clean care: Preventing the spread of infection.

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### Essential steps to safe, clean care

**Enteral feeding**

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**Risk elements**
- Preparation and storage of feeds
- Administration of feeds
- Care of insertion site and enteral feeding tube
- Preventing the spread of infection

**Aim**
To reduce the risk of infection associated with enteral feeding

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**Essential steps to safe, clean care**

**Enteral feeding**

Reducing healthcare-associated infections in Primary care trusts; Mental health trusts; Learning disability organisations; Independent healthcare; Care homes; Hospices; GP practices and Ambulance services.

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### How to use the review tool

**Step 1**
- All staff have had the opportunity to look at the review tool and supporting evidence. They have had time to understand and answer any questions.

**Step 2**
- A short period of time to conduct the series of observations is determined. The number of observations needed is determined by the team or individuals involved.

**Step 3**
- Following direct patient/client contact or procedure, complete the review tool horizontally. Indicate ‘yes’ when a risk element has been performed or is considered not applicable and ‘no’ when it has not been performed.

**Step 4**
- When each observation has been completed, identify whether all risk elements have been performed.

**Step 5**
- The aim is for all risk elements to be completed within the care process. When this is not being achieved, score the risk elements vertically on the review tool. This will help to identify which risk elements are not being performed.

**Step 6**
- Timely feedback should be given, and a change in actions or practice should be implemented to progress improvement. Refer to the risk elements and safety actions in the leaflet for evidence to support the change in action.

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**Compliance for each risk element**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk elements</th>
<th>Compliance for each risk element</th>
<th>Target: 100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation and storage of feeds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
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</table>

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**Number of Ns**

Number of Ns scores 1. Number of Observations x 100 = % Compliance for each risk element.

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In the example, assume 52 patients are cared for in a hospital ward in a 24-hour period. 70% compliance will mean you care for 4 patients who get ill.

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**Essential steps to safe, clean care**

Reducing healthcare-associated infections in Primary care trusts; Mental health trusts; Learning disability organisations; Independent healthcare; Care homes; Hospices; GP practices and Ambulance services.
Enteral feeding means using the gastrointestinal tract for the delivery of nutrients, which includes eating food, consuming oral supplements and all types of tube feeding. This method of feeding has resulted in a range of different routes and systems for delivery of nutrition, and more patients are now being fed by home enteral feeding tubes in the community setting. The need for education and training in infection prevention and control is vital for the provision of the clean and safe care of all enteral feeding systems. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence found that 30% of feeds were contaminated with a variety of microorganisms, largely due to the poor preparation or poor administration of feeds, (NICE 2003). The research found that the rates of contamination were highest in home settings and thus reinforces the need to focus on infection prevention and control practices within the community setting. These should be read in conjunction with Essential steps to safe, clean care: Preventing the spread of infection.

Risk elements and safety actions

The risk elements of the care process listed below are based on the NICE guidelines (NICE, 2003). The risk elements form the basis of reducing the risk of infection, and the safety action points indicate how the risk elements should be carried out. The list of elements and safety action points are not meant to replace existing guidelines but to act as a simple method for improving the reliability of the clinical process. Where local guidance and policies already exist, their use in clinical practice can be assessed by using this intervention, or by tailoring the review tool to meet local needs.

The risk elements are divided into three distinct interventions:

- Preparation and storage of feeds
- Administration of feeds
- Care of insertion site and enteral feeding tube

Education of patients/clients, their carers and healthcare personnel should be integral to all risk elements. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Essential steps to safe, clean care: Preventing the spread of infection.

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Preventing the spread of infection

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Reference

Context

Enteral feeding means using the gastrointestinal tract for the delivery of nutrients, which includes eating food, consuming oral supplements and all types of tube feeding. This method of feeding has resulted in a range of different routes and systems for delivery of nutrition, and more patients are now being fed by home enteral feeding tubes in the community setting. The need for education and training in infection prevention and control is vital for the provision of the clean and safe care of all enteral feeding systems.

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Aim
To reduce the risk of infection associated with enteral feeding

Risk elements
• Preparation and storage of feeds
• Administration of feeds
• Care of insertion site and enteral feeding tube
• Preventing the spread of infection
Essential steps to safe, clean care

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