

# Questions to Consider When Making A Decision About PEGs/Tube Feeding\*

## What is your family member's situation?

- is the underlying condition causing the eating problem likely to get better?
- is the feeding tube needed to help provide nutrition?
- how concerned are you about specific complications of the feeding tube (such as minor or major tube problems, bleeding, infections)?
- is the patient likely to become agitated with the tube and need to be restrained to keep it in?
- will feeding tube placement make a difference as to where the patient can live?
- is the patient aspirating, inhaling material into his/her lungs?
- does the patient have any of the factors associated with decreased chances of survival?
- how will the feeding tube affect the person's quality of life?

## What would your family member want?

- has s/he ever expressed her wishes (in a living will or previous discussion) about the use of medical technologies like feeding tubes?
- what are his/her beliefs and values about end-of-life care?
- if s/he could weigh the advantages and disadvantages, what do you think s/he would choose?
- what do you feel is in your family member's best interests?

## How the decision is affecting you:

- are you having feelings of guilt?
- are you feeling pressure from others?
- is there any conflict between your personal beliefs and those of the patient?
- do you worry about the future decisions regarding continuing with the tube?

## What questions need answering before you can decide?

## Who should decide about placing the tube?

## What is my overall "leaning" about placing a feeding tube?

\*Excerpted from Making Choices: Long Term Feeding Tube Placement in Elderly Patients by Mitchell, Tetroe and O'Connor