

Other Ways to Take Your Medication

You may need to temporarily stop eating and drinking if you have a serious swallowing issue (dysphagia) or are scheduled for a medical procedure that requires fasting. In both situations, ask to continue taking your Parkinson's medications with a small sip of water to avoid complications.

When swallowing issues are severe, crushing your pills or a different type of medication may be necessary for safety. Most immediate-release tablets can be crushed, but most extended-release tablets cannot.

Talk to the hospital pharmacist, speech-language pathologist and neurologist to explore medication alternatives, which may include one or more of the following:

- **Immediate-release tablets**, such as carbidopa/levodopa immediate release (Sinemet), can be crushed and either added to a thickened liquid like applesauce or given through a nasogastric (NG) tube (see blue box below).
- **Carbidopa/levodopa extended-release (Rytary) capsules** can be opened and sprinkled over applesauce.
- **Rotigotine transdermal patch (Neupro)**, a dopamine agonist, doesn't require swallowing pills.
- **Amantadine capsules** can be opened and the contents mixed with water or soft food. An oral amantadine formulation is also available.

A nasogastric (NG) tube is a thin tube that goes in through your nose and down your throat into your stomach used for a temporary swallowing problem. It won't affect your ability to breathe or speak.

An NG tube can be used even if you have decided during advance care planning not to use a **feeding tube**, a more permanent surgical solution used to prolong life.

If you have been using any of the following non-oral medications, ask to use your home supply as prescribed if it is unavailable through the hospital pharmacy.

- Apomorphine subcutaneous injections (Apokyn)
- Levodopa inhalation powder (Inbrija) via inhaler
- Levodopa enteral suspension (Duopa) via surgically implanted tube between the stomach and small intestine
- Foscarbidopa/foslevodopa (Vyalev) for subcutaneous infusion