

How to Tube-Feed a Weak Kid

By Cheryl K. Smith from [Raising Goats For Dummies](#)

One of the most exciting parts of raising goats as part of a green lifestyle is kidding. But when a baby goat is born too weak to suck, you need to get fluids into him. If the kid is a newborn, he needs colostrum. To boost the kid's energy, add some corn syrup or Nutridrench to the colostrum.

For a weak kid that has already gotten colostrum, use electrolytes, B vitamins, probiotics, and goat milk or milk replacer. If the goat is being tube-fed because of scours, the electrolytes give him energy and give the gut time to heal.

You may have to tube feed a weak kid only one time. If you need to tube-feed a kid more than once, do it only every 2 to 4 hours with the same small amount.

To tube-feed a kid, you need the following equipment:

- Feeding tube
- 60 cc syringe with an irrigation tip
- Bowl of clean warm water
- 6 cc syringe
- A helper

To tube-feed a kid, take the following steps:

1. Measure the distance you need to insert the tube so it ends up in the kid's stomach.

Measure from the nose to the center of the ear. Then measure from the ear down to the chest floor. Add the two measurements and mark the tube at that point.

2. Have someone hold the kid so she is sitting up, not on her side.
3. Hold the kid's head straight up so the bottom of the chin and front of the neck are in a straight line.
4. Dip the end of the tube in the warm water, and insert the tube into the kid's mouth, over the tongue and down the throat until the length you marked is all the way in.

You may be able to feel the tube as it passes down the esophagus. Very weak kids won't even struggle.

If the kid was crying before you inserted the tube and suddenly stops during the process, pull it out until the kid can cry. Tube feeding into the lungs can cause pneumonia.

5. Determine whether the tube is inserted correctly:
 - Smell the end of the tube for the milk smell of the stomach.

- Listen at the end of the tube for little crackles. If you hear breath sounds, withdraw the tube and start over.
- Place the end of the tube into a cup of water. If it blows bubbles, you are in the lungs and need to try again.



Keep a kid's head up when you tube-feed it.

6. Inject about 5 cc of water into the tube with the 6 cc syringe to make sure it flows down the tube.

If not, withdraw it a few inches and try again to make sure the tube isn't against the stomach wall or blocked in some way.

7. Put 2 to 4 ounces of the feeding liquid into the syringe and attach the syringe to the end of the tube.

Don't use the inside part of the syringe; gravity will deliver the fluid to the stomach if you hold the syringe above the kid.

8. Add another 10 cc of water to the syringe.

This step helps prevent the kid from aspirating the milk or electrolytes when the tube is being removed.

9. Remove the syringe from the end of the tube. Then remove the tube slowly, with a finger over the end.

Putting your finger over the end helps prevent excess fluids from getting into the lungs. Removing the tube too quickly can cause the kid some discomfort and possible tissue damage.

10. Clean and sterilize your supplies after each feeding.