

Medicine Supply Notification – unblocking enteral feeding tubes where no Clog Zapper is available

To: GHNHSFT Doctors, Nursing Staff, Dietitians and Pharmacists.

From: Pharmacy

Date: July 2025

- Clog Zapper®, an enzyme formula previously used to unblock enteral feeding tubes, has been discontinued.
- It was commonly used as a second-line treatment to unblock gastric and jejunal feeding tubes when other methods failed.
- This alert provides alternative methods using Pancreatic Enzyme Replacement Therapy (PERT) to attempt to unblock enteral feeding tubes before considering tube replacement.
- Note: Use of PERT for this purpose is off-licence.
- Some PERT products require sodium bicarbonate to optimise pH for enzyme activation and enhance effectiveness.
- Different PERT and sodium bicarbonate products can be used in combination.
- NOTE: Use PERT to try to unblock enteral feeding tubes where the following 1st line options have failed:
 - Milking the tube.
 - Using a 20ml enteral syringe to increase the flushing pressure. NB: Instil gently, do not push using excessive force.
 - Use a push-pull technique when attempting to flush with a syringe filled with warm water / carbonated water (not fizzy drinks).
- NOTE: Due to a national shortage of PERT products, prescribe only small quantities when used for unblocking feeding tubes in patients where this is an infrequent occurrence.
- NOTE: This alert does not override usual guidance with regards to care and management of enteral feeding tubes [e.g., jejunal feeding tubes can only be flushed using sterile water (or cool-boiled water)]

PERT to unblock feeding tubes.

The following options to unblock enteral feeding tubes using PERT has been ranked in order of preference considering current medication shortages, cost, licensed status, and practicality for the patient. There is no need to exhaust all the below options before considering replacement of a persistently blocked feeding tube where clinically necessary.

The following methods can be used for any enteral feeding tubes – including tube sizes 10Fr and smaller.

NB: If the patient already takes PERT for PEI, one capsule of their usual supply can be used even if this is a higher strength than used below (or if on Pancrex V powder already a dose of this can be used).

	PERT	Sodium Bicarbonate	Prescribe for GHT inpatients on EPR	Prescribe for community patients on FP10
1 st line	Creon 10,000unit capsule <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 x caps to be supplied to allow 2 attempts	Sodium Bicarbonate powder <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Same as baking powder / bicarbonate of soda that can be purchased	Prescribe: Creon 10,000units capsules Dose: 10,000units Freq: single dose / stat dose	Prescribe: Creon 10,000units capsules Dose: 10,000units Freq: stat dose, can be repeated

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open 1 x Creon 10,000unit capsule for the contents. Crush the enteric coated granules. Measure out ¼ teaspoon (half of a 2.5ml medicine spoon) of sodium bicarbonate powder. Mix the both together with 10-15ml water. Use a 20ml syringe to draw up the mixture and slowly instil into the blocked tube until resistance is met. Leave in tube for approx. 60minutes. Then attempt to flush the tube with water using a gentle push-pull technique. This process can be repeated if needed. Can be done in a home setting by the patient if needed. 		Route: type of enteral tube Indication: unblock feeding tube Additional comments: mix the crushed contents of the Creon capsule with half a 2.5ml spoon of sodium bicarbonate powder and 10-15ml of water. NB: Sodium bicarbonate powder cannot be prescribed on EPR as it is a food grade product. It is supplied by kitchens /general stores.	Route: type of enteral tube Supply: 2 capsules of Creon 10,000units (If tube becomes blocked regularly consider supplying 1x100 capsule pack) Sodium bicarbonate powder / baking powder / bicarbonate of soda to be purchased from supermarket shops.
2nd line	Creon 10,000unit capsule <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 x caps to be supplied to allow 2 attempts 	Sodium Bicarbonate 500mg capsules <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 x caps to be supplied to allow 2 attempts 	Prescribe: Creon 10,000units capsules Dose: 10,000units Freq: single dose / stat dose Route: type of enteral tube Indication: unblock feeding tube Additional comments: mix the contents of the Creon capsule with sodium bicarbonate and 10-15ml of water.	Prescribe: Creon 10,000units capsules Dose: 10,000units Freq: stat dose, can be repeated Route: type of enteral tube Supply: 2 capsules of Creon 10,000units (If tube becomes blocked regularly consider supplying 1x100 capsule pack)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open 1 x Creon 10,000unit capsule for the contents. Crush the enteric coated granules. Open 1 x Sodium Bicarbonate 500mg capsule for the contents. Mix the contents of both together with 10-15ml water. Use a 20ml syringe to draw up the mixture and slowly instil into the blocked tube until resistance is met. Leave in tube for approx. 60minutes. Then attempt to flush the tube with sterile or warm water using a gentle push-pull technique. This process can be repeated if needed. <p>Can be done in a home setting by the patient if needed.</p>		Prescribe: Sodium bicarbonate 500mg capsules Dose: 500mg Freq: single dose / stat dose Route: type of enteral tube Indication: unblock feeding tube Additional comments: mix the crushed contents of the sodium bicarbonate capsule with sodium bicarbonate and 10-15ml of water.	Prescribe: Sodium bicarbonate 500mg capsules Dose: 500mg Freq: stat dose, can be repeated Route: type of enteral tube Supply: 2 capsules of Sodium bicarbonate 500mg (If tube becomes blocked regularly consider supplying a whole pack)