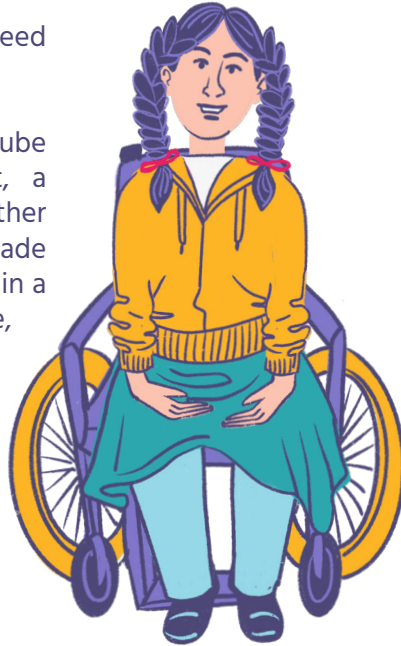


### CHALLENGE

More children than ever need to be tube fed.

The default choice for a tube fed diet is formula. But, a blended diet is also another option. A blended diet is made from table food that is put in a blender, turned into a puree, and fed to your child through a feeding tube.

How do dietitians, parents or carers, and children and young people decide what's best?



### THE RESEARCH

Key research questions  
What are the risks, benefits and resource implications for using home-blended food for children with gastrostomy tubes compared to currently recommended formula feeds?

### METHODS

Qualitative study followed by prospective cohort study of 180 children.



### RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings show home-blended diets for children who are gastrostomy fed should be seen as a safe alternative to formula feeding for children, unless there is a clinical contraindication. Equality of access to home-blended diets for children with gastrostomy should be assessed by local clinical teams. Vitamin D supplementation should be considered for those having a home-blended diet with gastrostomy.

### KEY FINDINGS

- Children receiving a home-blended diet were more likely to live in areas of lower deprivation, and their parents had higher levels of education.
- Children receiving a home-blended diet had a higher dietary fibre intake and demonstrated significantly better gastrointestinal symptom scores compared to those receiving a formula diet.
- Safety outcomes were similar between groups and over time.
- Total costs to the statutory sector were higher among children who were formula fed, but costs of purchasing special equipment for home-blended food and total time spent on child care were higher for families with home-blended diet.



To find out more about the research, visit:

