

BACKGROUND

- Oral feeding is essential for oral motor and sensory development, self-regulation, and parent-infant bonding. This is especially true for infants with congenital heart disease.
- Prior to 2022, this large academic medical center performed along the PAC3 centerline of 47%
- Beginning in 2022, our center experienced a sustained decline in exclusive oral feeding at discharge, prompting the need for a targeted quality improvement initiative to increase oral feeds at discharge.

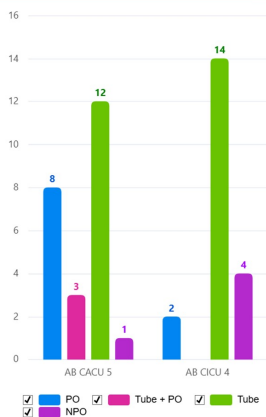
SMART AIM

Increase the percentage of Heart Center patients discharged home on exclusive oral feeds from the 2024 baseline of 33.9% to 40.7% by December 31, 2025.

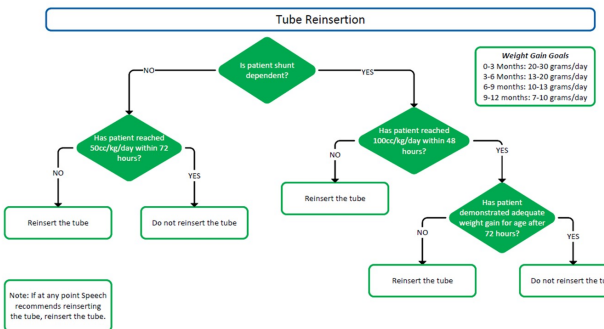
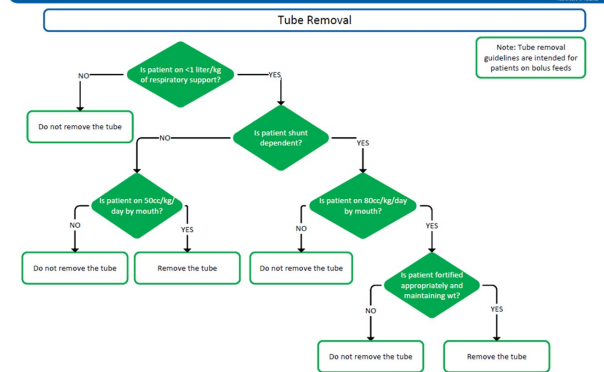
PROJECT INTERVENTIONS

Admission Feeding Checklist	Family Education Packet	Feeding Tube Algorithm
Admission form and process that enabled admitting provider to enter feeding orders quicker after patient admission.	Teaching sheet aimed at helping parents understand the necessity of feeding, benefits of oral feeding, and resources available for them.	Standardized Heart Center approach to feeding tube removal and reinsertion.

LIVE FEEDING DASHBOARD



Heart Center Feeding Tube Guidelines



RESULTS

Oral Feeding at CACU Discharge



CONCLUSION

The percentage of Heart Center patients discharged home on exclusive oral feeds increased from 33.9% in 2024 to 42.3% in 2025 with a Q4 average of 51.5%. The length of stay remained stable at the PAC3 benchmark. These findings suggest that standardized feeding processes and caregiver education may improve oral feeding outcomes without increasing hospital length of stay.

NEXT STEPS

- Sustain improvements through continued use of the feeding checklist, teaching sheet, and feeding algorithms. Utilize the live feeding dashboard for ongoing monitoring and feedback
- Use of the Impact vs. Effort Matrix to guide future interventions, expansion, and evaluation of long-term outcomes

Next steps will focus on the barriers and potential interventions below.

Feeding orders in different places	Feeding attempts not happening as ordered	Dedicated time to talk about feeds
- Mandate feeding strategies order. - Include feeding strategies in admission order set and postop order set.	- Have PCT's trained to feed in CICU - Reminder in the EPIC brain	- Add to feeding questions to ReCAP - Create a pathway for advancing feeds - Feeding rounds