Exclusive Enteral Nutrition

The 7-day challenge

Chloe Elliott, Lauren Reid and Lucy Jackman.
Specialist Paediatric Dietitians from Great Ormond Street
Hospital for Children, London, UK

Crohn’s Disease (CD) and EEN

CD is a chronic inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) characterised by inflammation of the gastrointestinal tract which can cause symptoms such as: rectal bleeding, nocturnal stooling, abdominal pain and diarrhoea. Diagnosis in childhood and adolescence is more common than in adulthood, contributing to approximately 25% of all cases. Children are thought to have a more aggressive phenotype compared to adults with CD and subsequently the number of children diagnosed is increasing. Nearly all children present with weight loss, faltering growth and nutritional deficiencies.

Guidelines recommend that EEN should be continued for a minimum of six weeks to induce remission, but it may be prolonged as required. The liquid feed can be administered orally or via an enteral feeding tube. Normal diet is introduced at the end of this period.

EEN is an effective alternative to corticoid steroids (CS) in children with CD. As well as preventing the side effects associated with CS, the short-term advantages of using EEN include increased occurrence of mucosal healing, altered intestinal flora, improved growth, improved vitamin D status, heightened bone turnover, and improved quality of life. Little is known about the long-term outcomes in patients receiving EEN versus CS but it is proposed that EEN could increase the time between episodes of relapse.
“Although evidence supports that EEN is an effective treatment for CD, we can now say from experience that is not an easy treatment to adhere to.”

Our experience

Intake
We sampled a number of 1.5 kcal/ml polymeric liquid feeds. We consumed an average of 1500 kcal per day, reporting a range of 4-6 bottles a day (1200-1800 kcal per day) over the week period. Compliance improved during the working hours owing to distraction from hunger and others eating standard meals.

References