

SAFE TUBING, SAFE HOSPITALS

Tubing Laws in California and Beyond

California hospitals want to protect patients by avoiding tubing misconnections. State law asks that they do so by using connectors that are specific to intravenous, enteral feeding or epidural lines, rather than connectors that are multi-purpose.¹

One such design is known as ENFit. It does stop tubing misconnections, which could otherwise cause medication, nutrition or other fluids to be delivered to the wrong place in an infant's body. **But some hospitals and health care providers have concerns about the ENFit design:**

- It introduces unintended problems related to medication dosing.
- The moat, or area around the syringe barrel, is difficult to clear, **inadvertently increasing the dosage delivered** when the syringe is inserted into the feeding tube.
- If the moat is not cleared, **a premature infant may receive up to 30% more medication per dose**, placing the baby at risk for an overdose and adverse drug reaction.
- This moat design **increases the risk for infection** if residual breast milk or formula remains in the moat and is then connected to the feeding tube.
- The **potential for bacterial colonization** of the moat increases exponentially with the ENFit design.



NCFIH National Coalition
for Infant Health

Protecting Access for Premature Infants through Age Two



What does California law require?¹

In an effort to protect patients, the law requires that hospitals and health care facilities:

- Prevent dangerous or even deadly tubing misconnections by using connectors that will not fit into another connector other than the type they were intended for
- Develop a patient safety plan to prevent misconnections and adverse events.

Do hospitals have a choice?

The law requires hospitals to adopt new tubing connectors “unless an emergency or urgent situation exists.” When making their choice about which to use, hospitals should:

- Not overlook the safety of tiny, infant patients for fear of legal non-compliance
- Consider what is best for the health of their NICU patients before changing connectors.



How should other state legislatures address tubing connector issues?

Concerns still exist about the safety of the new ENFit tubing design. While industry innovates new options and health care providers weigh the risks, **policymakers should give hospitals the autonomy to decide what’s best for their patients.**



¹ AB 444 (Chapter 198, Statutes of 2015), Health and Safety Code Section 1279.6