

Growth Faltering: What You Should Know

What is growth faltering?

Growth faltering is used to describe children who weigh a lot less or who are growing much more slowly than most others their age. It has also been called failure to thrive.

Sometimes, children with growth faltering do not gain enough weight for normal healthy development. A doctor can tell if your child has growth faltering by looking at weight and height measured over time.

What causes it?

Growth faltering happens when a child doesn't get enough calories to grow normally. This can be caused by problems with feeding or eating, the child requiring more nutrients than most children their age, or medical problems that cause the child to have problems absorbing nutrients from their food.

Growth faltering can happen any time during childhood. It is more likely during times of change, like when the child switches from breast milk or formula to table foods, or when there is a change in routine or childcare plans.

How is it treated?

Your child's doctor will ask questions about your child's health and eating habits, examine your child, and look at growth charts. Growth charts map out how your child has grown over time. From this

information, the doctor can give you a plan to use at home to help your child get more nutritious calories to gain weight.

The treatment plan will include follow-up doctor's visits to check on your child's progress. The doctor can also give you information about programs in your community that can help you. Most children will improve when using the treatment plan.

If your child doesn't gain weight, the doctor may do lab tests or recommend you see a specialist. A hospital stay is usually not needed. Once your child shows signs of improvement, your child can return to normal check-ups. The doctor will keep track of your child's growth and developmental milestones at each visit. Be sure to tell the doctor any time you are worried about your child's progress.

Where can I get more information?

Your doctor

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/infantandtoddlernutrition/index.html>

HealthyChildren.org

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/Glands-Growth-Disorders/Pages/Failure-to-Thrive.aspx>

National Library of Medicine

<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000991.htm>

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