

Complex feeding clinic

Information for patients, parents and guardians

Your child has been referred to the outpatient complex feeding clinic by their gastroenterologist (specialist doctor). The clinic offers support, assessment and treatment for babies and children with eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties. This factsheet explains what will happen at the initial appointment and we hope it will answer some of the questions you are likely to have. If you would like more information, please feel free to contact us.

Your child's first appointment

The initial appointment will focus on finding out if attending the complex feeding clinic could be helpful for your child. It will last around 90 minutes and will involve discussion with two or more healthcare professionals.

These may include:

- specialist children's doctor
- nutritional nurse specialist
- speech and language therapist (SALT)
- clinical psychologist
- dietitian

What will happen?

The team will ask questions about your child's health, medical history and their past and current eating and drinking history. We'll also discuss their nutritional needs and oro-motor skills (the skills involved in speech and eating and drinking development).

We'll discuss any psychological or other factors that may be impacting on your child's eating and drinking, and you will have a chance to discuss any concerns you may have.

If there's time, the team may watch your child eat and drink. This will help to build up a picture of their skills and any difficulties they may have. Your child should be slightly hungry at the appointment so that they are interested in eating. Please bring a typical snack for them to eat and a drink, along with any utensils they usually use (their cup, bowl and spoon, for example). We may look in your child's mouth and carry out some mouth games too.

What else to bring to the appointment:

- your child's personal child health record (red book)
- a list of any medicines and dietary supplements they are taking
- reports from any previous feeding or developmental assessments, as these may help us to build up a picture of how your child's eating and drinking is changing over time
- details of any professionals involved in your child's care
- food diary/any questionnaires we have sent you to complete

There will be some toys available for your child to play with, but feel free to bring a favourite toy or book along to help occupy and entertain them during the appointment.

After the appointment

At the end of the appointment we'll discuss with you whether we feel that further appointments in the complex feeding clinic could be helpful for your child, and if so they will be arranged.

Shortly after the appointment, you will receive a report from the feeding team, containing information about their observations, conclusions and advice. A copy will be sent to the doctor who referred your child, along with their GP and any therapists and nurses who are involved with your child in the community.

Follow up appointments

We may offer your child further assessment sessions or an appointment with one or more members of the team. Follow up appointments usually last about 45 minutes, and may involve some of the following specialists:

- **dietitian** to look at the nutritional balance of your child's intake
- **clinical nutrition specialist** for support with your child's intake and gastrostomy management (feeding via a tube), if appropriate

- **clinical psychologist** to explore a range of areas that may be related to your child's eating and drinking
- **speech and language therapist (SALT)** to assess things including how your child reacts to and consumes food and drink, swallowing, and ways to develop their oral skills

At each appointment we'll review whether further sessions are required, usually up to a maximum of six sessions.

Working with other teams

We may need to liaise with your local support services, including your child's nursery or school, speech and language therapy (SALT), or your local dietitian.

Contact the team

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's appointment, please get in touch with us on 023 8120 6674.

We look forward to meeting you.

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audiotape, please telephone **023 8120 4688** for help.

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