

Multidisciplinary feeding clinic

Information for children, families and carers

We have given you this factsheet because your child has been referred to the outpatient multidisciplinary feeding clinic by their gastroenterologist (specialist doctor). It explains what the multidisciplinary feeding clinic is and what will happen at your child's first appointment so that you know what to expect and can help to prepare your child. We hope it will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us using the details at the end of this factsheet.

What is the multidisciplinary feeding clinic?

The multidisciplinary feeding clinic is a specialist clinic that offers support, assessment and treatment for babies and children with eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties.

The multidisciplinary feeding team is made up of a number of healthcare professionals from different specialities who work together to provide the best care for your child.

How should I prepare for my child's first appointment?

Eating and drinking

During the first appointment, we will usually offer your child an opportunity to eat and drink so that we can observe them. This will help us to build up a picture of their skills and any difficulties they may have. To help ensure your child wants to eat and drink during this appointment, we ask that they come to this appointment slightly hungry. 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).

Items to bring with you

Please bring the following items with you to your child's appointment:

- your child's personal child health record (red book)
- a list of any medicines and dietary supplements your child is taking
- reports from any previous feeding or developmental assessments (these may help us to build up a picture of how your child's eating and drinking may have changed over time)

- details of any professionals involved in your child's care
- your child's food diary or 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.

What will happen at my child's first appointment?

At your child's first appointment, we will focus on finding out if attending the multidisciplinary feeding clinic could be helpful for your child.

The appointment can last up to two hours. During the appointment, you will meet with two or more healthcare professionals, including:

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

We will ask questions about your child's:

- health
- medical history
- past and current eating and drinking history

We will also discuss:

- your child's nutritional needs and oro-motor skills (the skills involved in speaking and eating and drinking development).
- whether there are any psychological factors or other factors that may be impacting on your child's eating and drinking.

We may also ask to look in your child's mouth and carry out some oro-motor games and exercises.

This appointment is a good opportunity for you to ask any questions or discuss any concerns you or your child may have.

What will happen after the appointment?

At the end of the appointment, we will discuss with you whether we feel that further appointments in the multidisciplinary feeding clinic could be helpful for your child. If we think your child would benefit from further appointments, we will arrange these as necessary.

Shortly after the appointment, we will send you a report containing information about our observations, conclusions and advice. We will also send a copy of this report to:

- the doctor who referred your child to the multidisciplinary feeding clinic
- your child's general practitioner (GP)
- any therapists or nurses who are involved with your child in the community

What will happen at the follow-up appointments?

We may offer your child further assessment appointments or an appointment with one or more members of the multidisciplinary feeding team. These follow-up appointments usually last up to 60 minutes.

At the follow-up appointment(s), your child may see:

- a **dietitian** to look at the nutritional balance of their diet.
- a **clinical nutrition nurse specialist** for support with their diet and gastrostomy management (feeding via a tube), if appropriate.
- a **clinical psychologist** (who has specialist knowledge in child development and emotional and behavioural difficulties) to explore a range of areas that may be related to their eating and drinking.
- a **speech and language therapist (SALT)** to assess how they react to and consume food and drink, their swallow function, and ways to develop their oral skills.

As the clinic setting may not fully reflect your child's usual behaviour, we may ask you to record short video clips of your child eating at home or at school, so that we can observe their feeding in a more natural environment. Please bring any video recordings you have taken with you to your child's next follow-up appointment or send them to us via the details we have given you.

At each appointment, we will review whether your child needs any further appointments in the multidisciplinary feeding clinic. We usually offer up to a maximum of six appointments.

Working with other teams

We may need to liaise with other teams that are involved with your child's care, such as your local support services, to ensure we work together to give your child the best care. This may include your child's:

- nursery or school
- local speech and language therapist (SALT)
- local dietitian
- local paediatrician
- community nursing team

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's multidisciplinary feeding clinic appointment, please contact us.

Burseldon House

Telephone: **023 8120 6674** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm)

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For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport