

Failure to thrive

What is failure to thrive?

Failure to thrive is a term used to describe poor weight gain in children under five years. Nutrition is the main factor for weight gain and growth in children up to two years of age. The inability to gain weight in accordance with the expected gains can be due to a variety of factors:

- Structural conditions, for example cleft lip or palate
- Issues with sucking or swallowing
- Allergies or intolerances
- Persistent vomiting or reflux
- Persistent diarrhoea
- Decreased absorption of nutrients
- Chronic illnesses or conditions
- Localised infections
- Genetic conditions

Treatment for poor weight gain

The treatment process will depend on the cause of your child's poor weight gain. Your doctor will discuss which treatment process is appropriate for your child.

If the doctor admits your child to hospital, they will have a strict feeding regime and will be fed either with bottles or via a nasogastric tube. A nasogastric tube is a thin soft tube that is passed through your child's nostril, down the back of the throat, through the oesophagus (food pipe) and into the stomach. It is designed to provide fluids, liquid food and medications if they are unable to take them orally.

Your child will be weighed regularly in hospital to assess weight gain and growth.

If hospitalised

Admission

The admission process is an opportunity to discuss your child's hospital stay and any special needs they may have while in hospital or for going home.

Visiting hours

The Cabrini Paediatric Ward does not have set visiting hours.

Discharge

Your child will be discharged when your doctor is happy with their progress and condition and you are confident with caring for them at home.

Please report to the reception desk in the foyer of the hospital before leaving to finalise any administrative paperwork.

Care at home

Your child will have an ongoing feeding regime following discharge from hospital. Some children require nasogastric tube feeding at home for ongoing weight gain and growth. If your child requires long term care, your doctor will refer you to an appropriate home care service to assist you with feeding and the care of the nasogastric tube.

Follow-up

Please contact your doctor's rooms to organise a follow-up appointment.

When to contact your doctor

- Decreased feeding or weight loss
- Persistent vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- Persistent temperature of 38.5°C or higher
- Issues with the nasogastric tube, if applicable

Questions

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact the Ward using the phone number below.