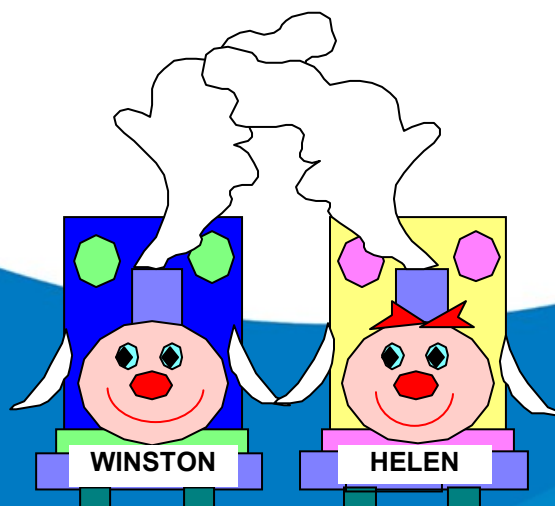


# Faltering Growth

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Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona  
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## The Nature of the condition

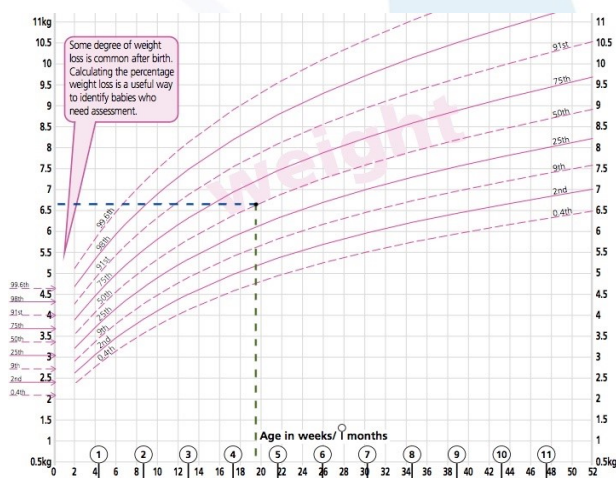
The term “faltering growth” is applied to babies and young children. Faltering growth means that a baby or young child is not growing to the rate that you would normally expect at their age.

## How is faltering growth diagnosed?

Faltering growth is usually diagnosed by a healthcare professional. The child is weighed and measured by a healthcare professional during routine check-ups and their growth will be recorded on a centile chart usually showing a pattern of growth following the centile chart.

Faltering growth may be diagnosed if the child's weight slips down under two standard centiles.

There is a different centile chart for a boy and girl.



If a child is not growing at the expected rate it is important that it is picked up an early stage and the reasons are investigated.

## Causes

It is thought to affect around 5% of children under the age of two and is mostly caused by the baby or child not having enough nutrition. This can occur if the baby or child:

- Is not given enough breastmilk, formula, or food (sometimes babies become sleepy before having enough)
- Gastrointestinal infection causing vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- Has breastfeeding or sucking reflex problems
- Is not willing to eat enough food
- Vomits food repeatedly, such as from severe gastroesophageal reflux
- Has trouble swallowing
- Has developmental delays that cause feeding problems
- Is not given solid food at an appropriate age
- In rare cases, there may be an underlying condition

## Treatment

Generally a baby will usually lose up 9.5% to 12.0% of their body weight in the first few days of life which is then regained. Naturally, we then want all children to grow as best as they can. If faltering growth is left untreated, this condition can ultimately limit adult height, and in severe cases it can affect brain growth.

Usually, children who develop faltering growth can be treated at home after an in depth assessment by a health professional. The health professional will have a discussion with parents about the baby's feeding history since birth, mealtime routines, any family concerns or anxieties and any other relevant medical or domestic information. Parents may be asked to keep a food diary in which you record food and drinks offered and taken. This will help the health professional see if there is any pattern that is affecting the baby's feeding. If parents are bottle feeding your baby, the health professional will help you check you are making up the feed exactly (not too dilute) and that the baby is able to get the milk as fast as they need to (by checking the teat size).

This will help the health professional see if there is any pattern that is affecting the baby's feeding. Interaction between the child and parents/family may also be observed. The health professional will also discuss with parents whether their baby seems content and satisfied with the feed, and will ask about the frequency of wet and dirty nappies. The assessment may help identify any problems that could be affecting the baby's feeding – in which case the health professional will offer parents/families advice and support.

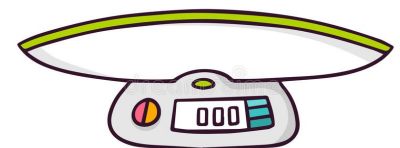
Treatment may involve increasing calorie consumption. Some children, including those with significant developmental delays, may be candidates for tube feeding.

Treatment usually lasts from a few months to a year, until the child starts growing well. Once the child has improved in the growth centiles, the health professional might recommend stopping the treatment. Most children are able to maintain their growth after that point.

## Summary

Following a child's growth is essential to detecting nutritional deficiencies or underlying disease. When a child's growth falters, a baseline workup and nutritional assessment should be performed. Depending on signs and symptoms, additional investigation and referral to a specialist may be considered. Using a combination of nutritional and medical therapies, health professionals work closely with families to optimise children's growth and health.

However, a change in growth percentile may occur in a normal child in the first two or three years of life. For an otherwise healthy child, with a normal baseline workup and who is growing within his/her genetic potential, parents can usually be reassured.



Under-nutrition has been proven to decrease a child's activity levels, social interactions, curiosity and cognitive functioning. Therefore the relationship between nutrition, health and learning is undeniably strong as nutrition is one of the three major factors that impact a child's development.

Research studies show that nutrition in a child's early years is linked to their health and academic performance in later years.

If you have any further questions, please contact your child's consultant via their secretary via the hospital switchboard. The secretaries are available Monday to Friday, 9.00 am to 5.00 pm

If you need to contact the department outside of these hours, please phone either:

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