

What is Failure to Thrive/Infant Malnutrition?

- It is defined as poor growth in children during the first three years of life. Poor growth will sometimes be apparent because a child does not grow as fast as other children.

Symptoms of FTT

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| -Poor feeding | -Hard to feed | -Vomiting or diarrhea |
| -Sleeps too much or not enough | -Fussiness | -Weak cry |
| -Loses weight or does not gain enough weight | -Stiff or "floppy" muscles | -Slow in growth and development |
| - May not show interest in things around him | -Does not move around much | -Does not make eye contact when being held |

What causes it?

- The causes fall under two categories:
 - *Organic*: growth failure because of an acute or chronic condition that interferes with nutrient intake, absorption, metabolism or excretion or that increases energy requirements.
 - *Non-Organic*: growth failure because of home factors or not enough food offered or taken. Under-feeding is the most common cause of FTT in infants and young children.
 - Infants - Breastfeeding difficulties, not mixing formula properly, hard time shifting to solid food (6-12 months)
 - Toddler - Drinking too much juice, eating too little high-calorie foods, poor appetite

What is the impact?

- Failure to thrive is important to recognize and treat because it can cause developmental delays in your child. Though it is not always necessary to hospitalize children when there is concern for Failure to thrive, sometimes it is helpful to get the services the child needs inside the hospital, such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, nutrition, and social work.

Ways to help at Home?

The goal at home is to continue the weight gain your child has begun in the hospital.

Tools you'll need are: nutrition education, a plan for how to feed your child, follow up with your child's doctor to check growth, and continuing to treat any medical problems that have been found.

Infant

- Follow the feeding schedule your doctor or nurse has set up.
- Feed your baby at least every four hours. The important thing is that you watch your baby, not the clock, for signs that he is eating and content.
- Mix formula the way you've been instructed. Do not add extra water to make the formula last longer.
- If breastfeeding, you may need to see a lactation consultant. Also, be sure you are eating well, drinking plenty of fluids, and getting enough rest each day so your milk supply is enough for baby.
- It's very important for your baby's development that you bond with your baby. Talk and play with your baby whenever you can. Bath time, feeding time and diaper changes are great times for gentle hugs, talking to your baby and playing peek-a-boo. Your baby will really enjoy this!

Continued from Ways to help at home

Toddler

- Every meal counts - Fix healthy foods for your child. Sit down with your child when he/she eats and make mealtime fun. Don't force your child to eat or feed him/her too fast, start with small amounts of food and give more over time.
- Keep records - You may be asked to keep a written record of what and how much your child eats. Bring these records to your child's follow-up visits. Limit snacks so he/she is hungry for a regular meal.
- Limit your child's daily intake of fruit juice to less than a small cup (8 ounces).
- Follow any instructions from speech therapy on ways to help your child eat and drink safely.
- See <https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/InfantandToddlerNutrition/index.html>

Follow up and Prognosis

Be sure to keep all appointments with your child's doctor. This is very important!

Almost all children improve with treatment. However, your child needs regular well check-ups to make sure his/her growth and developmental stay on track. And make sure your child gets all his/her immunizations on time!

What to call a doctor for?

Treatment usually lasts from a few months to a year to make sure your child keeps growing well. Weight loss in any child is never normal. If you notice that your child has lost weight or isn't gaining weight, talk to your pediatrician.

Failure to Thrive/ Malnutrition

Resources:

Behavioral Health and Postpartum Support of the Caregiver and Child

Pregnancy and Postpartum Health Alliance of Texas <https://www.pphatx.org/gethelp>

PSI - Postpartum Support International <https://www.postpartum.net/locations/texas/>

Act Early Texas! (AET!) provides online screening tools to allow parents and early childhood (EC) professionals (ECP) the opportunity to conduct free developmental screenings on young children in Texas.

<https://actearlytexas.org/>

Health and Human Services - Early Childhood Intervention Services

<https://hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/early-childhood-intervention-services>

Lactation Resources:

La Leche League <http://www.la lecheleague.org> Phone: (800) La-Leche

National Woman's Health Information Center <http://www.4women.gov/Breastfeeding/>

Promotion of Mothers Milk, Inc <http://www.promom.org>

WIC Works Resource System <http://www.nal.usda.gov/wicworks>