

Faltering Growth

Symptoms and diagnosis

- It is not a condition in itself – there are lots of different possible explanations, with feeding problems being the most common.
- UK WHO growth charts should be used to plot weight, length and head circumference.
- The height/length of an infant needs to be measured to properly interpret changes in pattern.
- If a child is not growing at the expected rate, it is important that this is picked up at an early stage and the reasons investigated. E.g. acute illness, iron deficiency anaemia, CMPA, Coeliac disease, GORD or a child safeguarding issue.
- In the vast majority of cases, there isn't an underlying medical problem and a baby can be successfully treated at home.
- Crossing down centiles might not be a cause for concern, e.g. in babies from mothers with gestational diabetes. **Use your clinical judgement.**

Treatment

- **6 months and over:** Ensure appropriate solids are offered at regular intervals; ask about volume and frequency of milk and solids food. Once a food routine is established, milk intake should be around 500-600mls a day. More than that may compromise appetite for solids.
- **Under 6 months:** Ensure appropriate frequency and volume of feeds, as well as preparation technique. An infant's requirements are around 150mls/kg/day and most will need one or more feeds during the night.
Only then consider prescribing an equivalent volume of high energy formula to the child's usual intake of regular formula or breastmilk (but advise to continue breastfeeding) until an assessment has been performed and recommendations made by a paediatrician or paediatric dietitian.

Review and discontinuation of treatment

- All infants on high energy formula will need growth (weight and height/length) monitored monthly to ensure catch up growth occurs.
- Paediatric dietitians or paediatricians will advise if/when the formula should be stopped.

| | Formula | Presentation | Cost* | Cost per 100Kcal | Details |
|----------------------|--|--------------|-------|------------------|--|
| 1 st Line | Similac High Energy® (Abbott Nutrition) | 60mls | £0.66 | £1.09 | 100Kcal/100mls From birth up to 8kg |
| | | 200mls | £2.13 | £1.05 | |
| | Infatrini® (Nutricia) | 200mls | £2.31 | £1.16 | |
| | | 125mls | £1.46 | £1.16 | |
| 2 nd | SMA High Energy® | 250mls | £2.46 | £1.08 | 91Kcal/100mls |
| | Infatrini Peptisorb® (Nutricia) | 200mls | £3.54 | £1.77 | For malabsorption with or without allergy |

*MIMS January 2017

Useful resources for parents and health professionals

- NHS choice website: www.nhs.uk/Conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/Pages/help-baby-enjoy-foods.aspx
- Royal college of Paediatric and Child health website for WHO growth charts and tutorial: www.rcpch.ac.uk/growthcharts

NICE is currently working on a "Recognition and management of faltering growth in children" guideline. The expected publication is October 2017