

JULY, 2000

ADAMS COUNTY CHILD HEALTH NOTES:

Adams County Child Health Notes are distributed by Adams County Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) and Adams County Health District. This newsletter provides physicians and nurse practitioners with current information regarding identification and management of special health issues for children. Contributing agencies and programs include: Adams County Health District – Adams County ICC - Department of Health - Children With Special Health Care Needs Program (Contract #N08400), Univ. of Washington - Center on Human Development and Disability, Whatcom County Medical Home Team. Additional Child Health Notes are available at <http://depts.washington.edu/medhome/>.



Infants or children with poor weight gain are a common challenge in primary care settings. National and state surveys suggest that as many as 10% of children seen for primary care show signs of growth failure. Approximately 80% of these children may be failing before 18 months of age.

GROWTH FAILURE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Failure to thrive (FTT) or failure to grow is the failure to sustain a normal velocity of growth in weight and height. Serial growth measurements of all children are essential.

Concern over FTT arises when a child's weight curve has fallen 2 standard deviations below a previously established rate of growth. Thus, a child who was born small for gestational age who has an established pattern of growth at <5th%, but whose rate of growth is paralleling the normal growth curve, is not demonstrating FTT.

FTT may result from a variety of medical and nonmedical causes. There is often a mixed etiology. A primary cause is inadequate nutrition, which may result from one or more of the following:

- Inadequate intake
- Increased energy needs
- Increased losses (vomiting or diarrhea)
- Frequent illness (including respiratory disease)
- Neuro-developmental problems (e.g., oral-motor dysfunction)
- Psycho-social factors (poverty, poor maternal-infant interactions)

Evaluation of an infant or child showing poor weight gain or weight loss requires a careful medical history and physical evaluation, followed by a thorough history of feeding, diet analysis and possible feeding observation. The most frequent finding is that the child is not taking in adequate calories.

Management of feeding disorders with poor growth includes:

- Involving parents as partners in the process of diagnosis and treatment
- Addressing nutritional needs
- Continuing follow-up to assure adequate nutrition and to monitor development

Families of infants and children with FTT may benefit from an individualized consultation or an interdisciplinary team approach with any of the following specialists: nutrition, speech, occupational and/or physical therapy, nursing, and/or family support services.

REFERENCES

- Gahagan, Sheila & Holmes, Ronald (1998). A stepwise approach to evaluation of undernutrition with failure to thrive. Pediatric Clinics of NA, Vol 45 #1.
- Zenel, Joseph A., Jr., MD (1997). Failure to thrive: A general pediatrician's perspective. Pediatrics in Review, 18: 371-378. www.pedsinreview.org/cgi/content/full/18/11/371.
- Pediatric Nutrition Handbook, 4th Ed., 1998. American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Pediatric Nutrition Consultation On-line: <http://depts.washington.edu/nutrpeds>

Premature infants are at particular risk for feeding disorders with growth failure. Comprehensive care guidelines for this population are available through the University of Washington Gaining and Growing web site: staff.washington.edu/growing/

LOCAL CHILDREN'S NUTRITION RESOURCES IN (5) COUNTY

COMMUNITY FEEDING TEAMS:

Adams Co.	Callie Moore, PHN Adams County Health District Ritzville, WA 509-659-3317 Fax: 509-659-4109 moore_c@co.adams.wa.us	Yakima Co.	Jill Hilmes, FRC Children's Village Center for Child Health Services Yakima, WA 509-574-3260 Fax: 509-574-3210
Benton-Franklin Co.	Linda S. Lively, FRC Infant & Toddler Program Kennewick, WA 509-783-4046 or 800-210-0313		

REGIONAL CHILDREN'S NUTRITION RESOURCES INCLUDE:

Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center, Seattle	
• Nutrition Clinic:	(206) 528-2613
<i>Nutrition assessment, counseling and dietary instructions</i>	
• OT/PT Feeding Program:	(206) 526-2113
<i>Provides evaluation and individual or group treatment</i>	
University of Washington Center on Human Development and Disability, Seattle	
• Feeding Team:	(206) 685-1242
<i>Interdisciplinary team assessment of oral-motor development, nutritional status and eating behaviors</i>	
• Phenylketonuria (PKU) Clinic:	(206) 685-3015
<i>Diagnosis, consultation, dietary management, health supervision for children with PKU</i>	
Sacred Heart Medical Center, Spokane	
• Feeding and Growth Clinic	(509) 474-7185
Spokane County Health Dept., Spokane	
• Community Feeding Team	(509) 324-1692

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