

Faltering growth: recognition and management of faltering growth in children

Information for the public

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Slow growth in babies and children: the support to expect

Babies and children grow at different rates and it is normal to see them grow more slowly or quickly at times. If a child is not gaining weight or starts growing much more slowly than before it is sometimes called 'faltering growth'. There could be a simple reason, such as a feeding problem, which can be put right with support. It is important that your health visitor, midwife or GP can spot slower growth and give you the right help.

We want this guideline to make a difference to children who may have faltering growth and their families by making sure:

- that if your child's growth is slower than expected your health visitor or GP know what checks to do and how to support you
- you are offered help to tackle common problems like feeding, weaning or mealtime behaviour, which could be causing slower growth
- your health visitor and GP know when more tests might be needed and when you need to see a specialist.

Making decisions together

Decisions about treatment and care are best when they are made together. Your healthcare professionals should give you clear information, talk with you about your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns.

They should also:

- make sure you know what weight changes to expect in your new baby – for example, it is normal for babies to lose some weight in their first week of life
- always listen to and support you if you are worried about how your child is growing
- reassure you that slower growth does not always mean a child is unwell
- explain your child's growth charts and how they are used to measure growth.

If you can't understand the information you are given, tell your healthcare professional.

Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

Where can I find out more?

The organisations below can give you more advice and support.

- [Child Growth Foundation](#), 020 8995 2057
- [NCT](#), 0300 330 0700
- [The Breastfeeding Network](#), 0300 100 0212

NICE is not responsible for the content of these websites.

We wrote this guideline with people who have been affected by faltering growth and staff who treat and support them. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

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