

Feeding and Nutrition Screening Tool for Cerebral Palsy

Good nutrition is essential for children with cerebral palsy (CP) to reach their potential for growth and development. However, some children with CP may have difficulty gaining weight and may be underweight for their height and age. Difficulty gaining weight may be due to a number of reasons including difficulty consuming enough nutrition (food and fluids) to meet individual needs. The muscles of the mouth, face and throat may be impacted by CP and can cause difficulties eating and drinking enough food and fluids in a safe way. For these reasons, some children with CP may benefit from seeing a nutrition or feeding professional.

Hospital No:			
Surname:			
Forename(s):			
Sex:	Male	Female	
DOB:		Date completed:	

The following four questions can help identify if your child may benefit from referral to a dietitian (about nutrition) and/or a speech pathologist (about feeding difficulties).

These screening questions are designed:

- For children aged 2 – 19 years with cerebral palsy
- To help identify if the child has any difficulties with feeding or weight gain
- To be completed by parents or primary carers who know the child well

Please answer these questions about your child

1 Do you think your child is underweight? Yes No Unsure

2 Does your child have problems gaining weight? Yes No Unsure


3 Rate on a scale from 0 – 10, whether you think your child has any problems **eating** compared to other children of his/her age?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
No problems Major problems

4 Rate on a scale from 0 – 10, whether you think your child has any problems **drinking** compared to other children of his/her age?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
No problems Major problems

Produced by

 Dietetics and Food Services
Queensland Children's Hospital
501 Stanley Street, Street
South Brisbane, QLD 4101 Australia

t 07 3068 4746
e LCCH-diet@health.qld.gov.au
w www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au

Scoring and results

Now that you have completed the questions, score **1 point** per question for each of the following answers:

1. Yes or unsure
2. Yes or unsure
3. A value of 7 or higher
4. A value of 7 or higher

Overall scores:

An overall score of 3 or 4 means that your child may have feeding/swallowing difficulties that could impact on their feeding safety or they may have significant difficulty gaining weight.

For scores of 3 or 4, discuss your concerns about your child's feeding and/or weight gain with your child's main doctor. Your child may benefit from a referral to see a dietician or speech pathologist for a full assessment or support.

For health professionals:

For scores of 3 or 4, consider referral to a dietitian for a full nutrition assessment and/or a speech pathologist for a full feeding evaluation.

This screening tool was developed and validated in a group of 89 children with cerebral palsy: Bell KL et al DMCN 2019,61:1175-81, 'Development and validation of a screening tool for feeding/swallowing difficulties and undernutrition in children with cerebral palsy', available at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/dmcn.14220> under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial Licence at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>.