

Speech Pathology (Paediatric)

This document provides an overview of SALHN *Paediatric* speech pathology services. Paediatric speech pathology services are provided at Flinders Medical Centre and include:

- Feeding or Swallowing Difficulties

Feeding disorders are relatively common in premature infants or infants with congenital heart disease, following open-heart surgery, nonorganic failure to thrive, craniofacial abnormalities, cerebral palsy, autism, respiratory compromise (i.e. chronic lung disease, oxygen requirement, malacia/floppy airways), pain associated with feeding (i.e. reflux, allergies, strictures, constipation), immature motor, oro-motor and/or swallowing skills, sensory processing problems and nutritional deficits (ie metabolic disorders, absorption deficit).

Symptoms of feeding disorders in children may present a variety of ways, depending on the age of the child and stage of feeding development.

Services provided

- Feeding or swallowing difficulties in infants and children:
[Outpatient+GP+Referral+Guidelines+Speech+Pathology+Paediatric+Feeding+Disorders+SALHN.pdf](http://sahealth.sa.gov.au/Outpatient+GP+Referral+Guidelines+Speech+Pathology+Paediatric+Feeding+Disorders+SALHN.pdf)
(sahealth.sa.gov.au)

Services not provided

- Assessment and intervention for developmental speech, language and fluency disorders in children (See *SALHN Early Childhood and Family services [SALHN Early Childhood and Family Service page](#), *Flinders University Health2Go [Speech pathology page on Health2Go](#), *Kudos/NDIS [Kudos Services | Home](#), *Private providers [Speech Pathology Australia](#), [National Health Services Directory](#), *Department for Education “[Speech and language impairments](#)”)

For admission or *URGENT* advice contact Speech Pathology on

Flinders Medical Centre Ph: 8204 5933

Email: healthfmcspeechpathology@sa.gov.au

Triage Criteria for Outpatient Referrals for initial assessment

Category 1 Target within 2 weeks Current <2 weeks	Category 2 Target within 6 weeks Current <8 weeks	Category 3 Target within 2-3 months Current < 6 months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outpatient under 4 months and showing indications of aspiration / choking or has a history of chest infections • Outpatient over 4 months and up to 12 months showing indications of aspiration / choking and has history of chest infections sudden deterioration or change in swallowing • Outpatient or ED assessment who requires assessment to avoid admission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 12 months of age with suspected oral feeding or swallowing problems • Over 12 months and showing indicators of aspiration / choking with a history of chest infections • Child of any age with suspected oral feeding/swallowing problems who is unable to meet their nutritional or hydration needs orally with a declining weight percentile, i.e. is at risk of failure to thrive/faltering growth • Sudden deterioration or change in swallowing that is not associated with a normal childhood illness, e.g. tonsillitis • Assessment of children who are under Guardianship of the Minister or of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 12 months of age with daily indicators of choking/aspiration but nil significant respiratory history/chest infections • Presenting with oral feeding problems and not showing characteristics above including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - oral pharyngeal dysphagia - delayed oro-motor development - sensory aversion - problem feeder (less than 20 foods eaten and/or whole food groups not consumed) - chronic stable oral feeding problem • Concerns identified with a current eating and drinking care plan, e.g. carer having difficulty implementing the plan; evidence of complex psychosocial problems

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

General Information to assist with referrals and the and Referral templates for FMC and RGH are available to download from the SALHN Outpatient Services website www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/SALHNoutpatients

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Version	Date from	Date to	Amendment
1.0	July 2014	July 2016	Original
2.0	July 2022	July 2024	Amended services provided & triage criteria