OUTPATIENT GP REFERRAL GUIDELINES
Speech Pathology
Southern Adelaide Local Health Network (SALHN)

Paediatric Feeding Disorders

- Coughing or choking with food or drink
- Increased respiratory distress during feeding
- Faltering growth / failure to thrive
- Wet, gurgly, hoarse, or breathy voice during or after eating or drinking
- Inability to meet nutritional requirements orally
- Tube dependency
- Refusal to feed / oral aversion
- Stressful mealtimes
- Difficulty with developing chewing skills or transitioning to solids
- Refusal of/or difficulty with entire categories of food or textures

Information Required

- Any significant pregnancy/ birth history
- Any relevant congenital or developmental conditions
- Presence of Red Flags
- Duration of symptoms
- Associated symptoms
- Current daily oral intake (solids and liquids)
- Method of oral intake (breast/bottle/spoon or self- feeding)
- Current height/weight percentile and any recent decline in percentile
- Any known food allergies or intolerances

Investigations Required

- Nil specific investigations required. Please consider including the following information if these have been conducted:
  - Previous assessment of feeding by other professionals (ENT, Gastroenterologist, Paediatrician, Respiratory Physician, other speech pathologists or allied health professional)
  - Previous investigations (modified barium swallow or video fluoroscopy, endoscopy, chest x-rays)

Email Referrals to

- Paediatric Allied Health, Mark Oliphant Building: Health.fmcpaedalliedhealthreferrals@sa.gov.au
- **Phone**: 7117 0690

Red Flags

- Choking, gagging, coughing episodes during feeding
- Repeated chest infections/respiratory illnesses
- Faltering growth/declining weight/failure to thrive
- Unusual change of voice with feeding ('breathy' or 'wet' sounding)
- Nasal regurgitation or frequent sneezing during feed
- Lengthy feed times (longer than 30-40mins per bottle)
- Not managing own secretions
- Multiple swallows to clear fluid
- Pain/discomfort during swallowing
- Sudden onset of feeding difficulties

Suggested GP Management

- Reinforce safe feeding practices e.g. Limit choking hazards that are more likely to result in occlusion
- Reinforce positive feeding techniques i.e. No forcing, pacing feeds
- Consider further investigations and referrals as indicated (examples of investigations listed above)
- Present at ED if signs of dehydration, increased parental distress with feeding, sudden onset of signs of dysphagia
- Referral to FMC Paediatric Speech Pathology for assessment

Clinical Resources

- http://www.asha.org/public/speech/swallowing/feeding-and-swallowing-disorders-in-children/
- http://raisingchildren.net.au
- http://www.nature.com/gimo/contents/pt1/full/gim o17.html
- Feeding Matters - Serving Kids with Pediatric Feeding Disorder

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

Version	Date from	Date to	Identifier: CC1.2862 Amendment
3.0	5/12/2025	5/12/2027	Amended contact details, red flags, information and investigations required, PFD descriptor & clinical resources

Government of South Australia
SA Health