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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Aneurin Bevan
University Health Board

Information for Patients/Carers
Children with feeding difficulties
Speech and Language Therapy

This leaflet explains how Speech and Language Therapists assess and help children who have problems with eating and drinking.

We assess and give advice:

- to ensure that your child can eat and drink safely (for example, looking at the textures of food that they are able to manage)
- to help you to develop your child's eating and drinking skills

Who we see

We see children who may:

- Show signs of possible difficulties with the safety of their swallow. Signs to look out for could include:
 - persistent chest infections
 - choking, coughing and gagging with food/drinks
 - gurgly noises in the throat after food/drink
- Have delayed eating/drinking skills that are out of line with their general development. This may include poor chewing and difficulties with textures suitable for their development stage.

Assessment

It is important to get as much information about your child as possible. We will ask you to complete a questionnaire when your child is referred to us. We will then discuss the information with you at your first appointment and how this is currently impacting on your child and the family.

During the assessment we may:-

- look into your child's mouth
- observe your child eating and drinking

We will ask you to bring what you usually use to feed your child such as bottle, cup, spoon and bowl. This will help your child feel more comfortable.

You will also need to bring a small selection of food and drink your child can manage, and food that is slightly more difficult.

Please do not give your child anything to eat or drink for one hour before the appointment time.

It is policy for us to wear gloves when carrying out examination of the mouth and we may also use specialist equipment such as stethoscopes.

We may also ask for further assessment by:-

- referral to another specialist speech and language therapist
- requesting a video x-ray to look at your child's swallow in more detail
- referral to a multi-disciplinary feeding team

We may work with other professionals e.g. dietitians, physiotherapists and occupational therapists as part of the assessment and ongoing management of your child's needs. For example, we may work with the dietitian to ensure that your child's nutritional needs are being met.

If you have any questions prior to the appointment, please contact:

Speech and Language Therapy Department Booking Centre on:-
01633 431640

We hope you find this leaflet useful. If you need further information about the speech and language therapy service or would like to make any comments or suggestions, please visit our website or contact:-

Speech and Language Therapy Service
Room 102
Aneurin Bevan University Health Board Headquarters
St Cadoc's Hospital,
Lodge Road, Caerleon, NP18 3XQ

Tel. No: 01633 431633

Email: Enquiries.SLT.ABB@wales.nhs.uk

Website: <http://www.sltgwentabhb.wales.nhs.uk>



**"This document is available in Welsh /
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg".**