Failure to Thrive

Failure to Thrive (FTT) is a condition in a baby or child that relates to the child's failure to grow (mentally, physically or emotionally). It also relates to gains in height and weight as expected for the child's age. It usually is noticed from infancy to the age of five. When the child is far below normal height and weight gains for his/her age, he or she should be evaluated medically, physically and psychologically. However, a child may be growing at a normal rate but be short in stature due to heredity. There may be a normal delay in growth that usually catches up with their peers at puberty or afterward.

CAUSES

- Medical - History of premature birth, infection, newborn illnesses, endocrine gland disorders, and/or chromosome and genetic disorders.
- Physical - Child abuse and/or child neglect, inability to suck or swallow, reflux, allergies, exposure to certain medicines before birth, and possible exposure to toxic chemicals.
- Psychological - Behavioral, psychological problems with the parents and/or child, adolescent or single parents.

DIAGNOSIS

- Detailed information about the pregnancy and any problems that developed while your child was in the nursery.
- Detailed information about your child's feeding habits.
- Physical examination of the child.
- Blood and urine tests.
- Psychological tests to evaluate child's emotional condition.
- X-rays.

TREATMENT

- The earlier the evaluation and diagnosis is made, the more effective the treatment will be.
- The treatment should be directed to the problem(s). This may require medical, physical or psychological treatment.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Take your child for regular well child checkups.
- Work with a nutritionist to evaluate the child's dietary needs.
- Keep a log or diary of your child's eating habits.
- Point out the positive things that occur with your child.
- Help your child cope with setbacks and teasing at school and with friends.
- Teach your child to do things on his/her own. Reward the child with compliments after succeeding.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your child's weight drops.
- Your child does not have a normal appetite.
- Your child develops behavioral problems.
- Your child becomes more hyperactive.
- Your child seems to be developing social and emotional problems in school and with friends.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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