



Perth Children's Hospital

Feeding Assessment and Support Team (FAST)

This flyer is to provide General Practitioners with information about FAST and how you can refer suitable infants and children to the service.

What is FAST?

FAST is an outpatient service to enable infants and children (and their families) with tertiary feeding difficulties access a multidisciplinary, time-responsive, and family focused service.

The service comprises a Consultant Paediatrician, Clinical Nurse, Dietitian, Speech Pathologist, and Occupational Therapist. This multidisciplinary team (MDT) works in collaboration with the family with children with Paediatric Feeding Disorder (PFD) and other feeding difficulties to identify and overcome barriers to safe, sustainable, and developmentally appropriate feeding/mealtime engagement.

What Referrals Does FAST Accept?

FAST will accept referrals for infants and children who have a PFD (see consensus statement: Goday et al., 2019) and who are at risk of hospitalisation or critical incident due to:

- Malnutrition or Faltering Growth
- Clinical signs of dysphagia e.g. aspirating, poor chest health, aspiration pneumonia
- Coexisting morbidities affecting feeding - respiratory difficulties, cardiac, prematurity, airway issues (laryngomalacia) etc.
- Enteral feeding
- Significant food aversion and/or distress during feeding

The requirements for referral are that:

- The patient has a current General Practitioner (GP), and/or Paediatrician (public/private) actively involved in their care who can investigate and manage all medical factors impacting on feeding and work in collaboration with FAST. *The GP/Paediatrician may be contacted if there are medical concerns regarding the patient.*
- The patient is not currently seen by a PCH Consultant or managed by a PCH medical team. These patients are not eligible for this service as their feeding difficulties will be managed by their current team.
- Please note that Child Health Nurses can refer to FAST however referrals will require a concurrent referral to the patient's GP. Referrals will not be accepted until there is confirmation of medical management.

The following referrals will not be accepted:

- Developmental feeding difficulties related to fussy eating, texture progression or reflux with no tertiary medical diagnosis. Consider referring to the Child Health Nurse, CDS (if in context of identified developmental delay) and private allied health services.
- Children with complex feeding difficulties who are eligible for, or are already receiving allied health services including NDIS, CDS or WACHS
- Children who reside in metropolitan Perth whose local health service has a multidisciplinary allied health feeding team
- Children with suspected/diagnosed with eating disorders (including ARFID)
- Children with suspected/diagnosed Autism Spectrum Disorder

What We Do:

For patients eligible for the service, we will:

- Provide a combined Dietetic and/or Occupational Therapy and/or Speech Pathology assessment of the infant/child's feeding and family mealtimes (as indicated)
- Work with the family to set and support feeding goals
- Where appropriate, liaise with the Clinical Nurse Specialist and/or Consultant Paediatrician. Please note not all children are seen by the Consultant Paediatrician.
- When tertiary feeding concerns are resolved but developmental feeding difficulties continue, refer on to appropriate community services
- Work collaboratively with the infant/child's GP/Paediatrician and handover care when appropriate

*FAST eligibility is reviewed periodically dependent on client need and goals.

How Can I Refer?

Referrals must be sent to: PCH Referral Office contactable via switch (6456 2222), Fax 6456 0097, email pch.referrals@health.wa.gov.au

For urgent FAST referrals please contact PCH Switchboard

Please include the following information in your referral:

- Medical diagnosis (if available)
- Description of current feeding related issues
- Recent weight and length/height
- Developmental flags/concerns
- Relevant social context including language spoken, CPFS, care arrangements.
- Other services and supports involved/referred
- An email address to enable direct correspondence with the referring GP

Please address the PCH pre-referral guidelines regarding 'Failure to Thrive' if applicable:

[Failure to thrive \(health.wa.gov.au\)](http://health.wa.gov.au)

Additional Information:

Email PCH.FAST@health.wa.gov.au or Switchboard: *FAST Feeding Outpatients*

PCH Switchboard 6456 2222

Emails will be reviewed within 2 business days and urgent matters will be responded to.