

Paediatric Speech Pathology Clinics at Western Health:

Western Health operates the following Specialist Clinic outpatient services for babies and children who require assessment and management of feeding and/or communication deficits. The focus of the service is to provide therapeutic support to babies and young children who have problems with eating, drinking, and/or communicating effectively with others. Referrals are triaged by a senior Paediatric Speech Pathologist into one of the following management pathways according to specific clinical requirements:

1. **Speech Pathology Newborn Services:** for babies/infants aged less than 12 months who have been identified as having a feeding difficulty or a high risk of impairments in early communication, play and/or spoken language development due to their neonatal history.
2. **Speech Pathology Infant Care Pathway:** for infants aged ≤ 24 months who require assessment, therapy and case management for identified moderate to severe deficits in more than one area of development. This pathway provides an acute, short term intervention service to these clients, which will include diagnostic assessment, appropriate onward referrals and liaison with community services as necessary.

Care may be multidisciplinary or single discipline, based on client and family needs and priorities. Clients will be considered for discharge from the pathway when they have been allocated to and can receive management from appropriate services within their community.

3. **Speech Pathology Feeding:** for pre-school aged children with eating and/or drinking difficulties appropriate for assessment and management by a Speech Pathologist alone or in a conjoint Speech Pathologist/Dietician service. Assessment may be clinical or instrumental, e.g. Video-fluoroscopy Study of Swallowing conducted in the Radiology Department.
4. **Speech Pathology Growth and Nutrition Clinic:** for specialised assessment and management of children identified with complex feeding issues which require a multidisciplinary approach, including that of a Paediatrician, Dietitian and Speech Pathologist. This clinic requires either a GP or a medical specialist referral to Dr Lisa Barrow. In the first instance, referrals are triaged through paediatric medical outpatients.

5. **Paediatric Speech Pathology Group:** for children already attending Speech Pathology, a feeding group is an additional therapy opportunity.

Referrals not seen at Western Health as services not provided:

- Children with isolated mild developmental needs will be re-directed to Community Health.
- Children accessing therapy through the National Disability Insurance Agency or Community Health Services.
 - Exception – where babies, infants and children already managed by community clinicians who have complex presentations requiring coordinated paediatric care and specialist feeding/communication assessment and management. In this instance, the Speech Pathology team will liaise with community clinicians, as appropriate.

Speech Pathology Alarm Symptoms:

- Where an acute intervention is required please refer the patient to the Emergency Department. If there is still concern regarding the referral, please call the Paediatric Specialists Outpatient number 8345 1727 and a clinician will respond to your call within 1 business day.

Access & Referral Priority – Paediatric Speech Pathology

The clinical information provided in your referral will determine the triage category. The triage category will affect the timeframe in which the patient is offered an appointment.

<p>URGENT (PRIORITY 1)</p> <p>Appointment timeframe within 30 days</p>	<p>ROUTINE</p> <p>Appointment timeframe greater than 30 days, depending on clinical need.</p>
<p>If aspiration risk identified, then allocation is organised immediately rather than patient being placed on waitlist.</p>	<p>Aspiration risk not identified</p> <p>Medical conditions</p> <p>Feeding difficulties</p> <p>Failure to grow</p> <p>Requires coordinated care</p> <p>Moderately complex social and/or developmental speech, language, play, communication, feeding and/or medical needs; not at risk of deterioration, but requiring differential diagnosis to access external services</p>
<p>Neonates or Children discharged from inpatient stay at Western Health or other hospital.</p>	<p>Healthy infant with isolated feeding difficulty</p> <p>Establishing feeds but may benefit from support</p> <p>Texture progression</p> <p>Faltering growth</p> <p>Oral feeding optimisation</p>
<p>Severe/highly complex social and/or developmental speech, language, play, communication, feeding and/or medical needs; at risk of deterioration; requiring assessment/support/referral to appropriate external services</p>	

Condition Specific Referral Guidelines:

Key information enables Western Health to triage patients to the correct category and provide treatment with fewer visits to outpatients, creating more capacity for care. If key information is missing, you may be asked to return the referral with the required information.

Condition:	Key Information Points:	Clinical Investigations
Speech Pathology Newborn Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full name, DOB, address and Medicare number of child • Caregiver names and contact details • Interpreter required/preferred language • Birth history (delivery, gestational age, apgar scores). • Social/family and medical history • Feeding history • Developmental milestones • Court / custody orders in place • Contact details of services and supports referred to / involved with child, e.g. Paediatrician, NDIS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of any investigations, e.g. MRI, Cranial Ultrasound, Microarray • Medical, nursing and allied health reports
Speech Pathology Infant Care Pathway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full name, DOB, address and Medicare number of child • Interpreter required/preferred language • Birth, social/family, medical and developmental history • Court / custody orders in place • Contact details of services and supports referred to / involved with child, e.g. Paediatrician, NDIS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of any investigations, e.g. MRI, Cranial Ultrasound, Microarray • Medical, nursing and allied health reports
Speech Pathology Feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full name, DOB, address and Medicare number of child • Caregiver names and contact details • Interpreter required/preferred language • Birth, social/family, medical, feeding and developmental history • Court / custody orders in place • Contact details of services and supports referred to / involved with child, e.g. Paediatrician, NDIS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of any investigations, e.g. MRI, Cranial Ultrasound, Microarray • Medical, nursing and allied health reports
Speech Pathology Growth and Nutrition Clinic	<p>This clinic requires a GP or a medical specialist referral to Dr Lisa Barrow. In the first instance, referrals are triaged through paediatric medical outpatients.</p>	