

Spectrum Pediatrics Feeding Tube Weaning Program

Thank you for your interest in our Feeding Tube Weaning Program. Below you will find an overview of our program and the five phases of our Tube Weaning Program: Intake, Assessment, Hunger Induction, Intensive Phase and Follow-up. Families who choose to participate in the program will be provided more specific information as they proceed through the program.

Intake Phase:

We conduct a short *Tube Weaning Program Intake* to gather information regarding your child. This intake typically takes about 15 minutes and takes place over the telephone. During the intake our therapist will gather some basic information about your child including a brief health and family history, your child's current eating habits and nutritional intake, and his or her attitudes towards food and eating. Spectrum Pediatrics will send you information on scheduling a *Tube Weaning Readiness Evaluation* for your child should one be indicated following the initial intake.

Assessment Phase:

The next step is a *Tube Weaning Readiness Evaluation*. In order to initiate this process families are asked to gather three types of information to proceed:

1. A completed Feeding Questionnaire (provided by Spectrum Pediatrics).
2. A 3-7 minute video picturing your child eating or being fed. More specifics about the video will be given if you decide to proceed with the assessment. This video needs to be uploaded to the internet and sent via linked email to Spectrum Pediatrics.
3. Your child's medical records from the hospitals, specialists, and therapists (including a growth chart). This information is usually acquired from the pediatrician's office. These documents should be provided to us in either a web-based format (uploaded) or disk or drive so that we may easily share the information with the feeding team at Spectrum Pediatrics, some of whom are located overseas.

The cost of the evaluation includes the review of the above information, consultation with relevant team members, and a written report for you to review and share with your child's doctors and therapists. It typically takes 4 weeks for the materials to be reviewed and the report to be completed. It also includes a 10-30 minute coaching conversation to discuss the results of the assessment, initial strategies to improve feeding, and development of a treatment plan. Any treatment recommendations made during this or any phase are done in conjunction with your child's treating physician.

Hunger Induction Phase:

Prior to beginning the tube weaning you will receive a *Hunger Induction Plan* for your child. This is a plan to slowly reduce the amount of nutrition your child is receiving by tube during the 5 days before the *Intensive Phase* of the wean begins. This plan will include detailed instructions about how

and when to alter your child's nutritional intake and encourage oral eating should your child be interested.

Intensive Phase:

During the *Intensive Phase of Tube Weaning*, the therapists at Spectrum Pediatrics will make recommendations to reduce, maintain, or increase tube nutrition based on your child's interest in food, self-regulation, and hunger awareness. Your child's health and overall safety will be monitored closely during this phase.

The treatment plan during the *Intensive Phase of Tube Weaning* is determined based on your child's individual needs and is reassessed on a daily basis. There will be two therapists from Spectrum Pediatrics working with your child during this process. You will see one or both therapists at least once a day during the duration of the weaning process. Often, the beginning of the tube weaning is marked by frequent therapy visits, with the therapists guiding most meals and snacks. Non-mealtime sessions are scheduled as needed for family education, family support, doctor's visit or team meetings.

The location of the therapy sessions during the tube weaning process is determined by your child and family's needs. While many sessions will take place in your family's home or place of residence during the tube weaning, other sessions will take place in local social and community settings. We typically recommend participation in unstructured feeding groups during the tube weaning so that children can learn to eat in a social setting with children who are experiencing similar challenges or modeling successes.

The feeding team is identified by you and your family and typically consists of family members, caregivers, and other important people in your child's life in addition to the therapists of Spectrum Pediatrics. You are welcome to invite professionals who are familiar your child to participate in the tube weaning process. Please keep in mind that the tube weaning process is dynamic and challenging. Children can be easily overwhelmed by the presence of too many adults.

Follow-Up Phase:

For the first month following your child's participation in the *Intensive Phase of Tube Weaning*, you will have scheduled weekly phone or video conferences with a member of the Spectrum Pediatrics Feeding Team to discuss your child's progress. Following this period, monthly phone or video conferences will also be scheduled to ensure ongoing success with feeding. These monthly conferences will continue for 3-6 months as needed. The decision to remove your child's feeding tube should be made in collaboration with your child's treating physician, your family, and the Spectrum Pediatrics team.

Please contact our office for information relating to the cost of participation in the *Feeding Tube Weaning Program* at Spectrum Pediatrics.