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Central California Pediatrics

Specialty information for physicians who treat children and expectant mothers.

Pediatric Nutrition: Evaluation, Treatment and Resources

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A child's nutritional status impacts their overall health and well-being. When a child presents with signs of malnutrition or obesity, it is essential that nutrition management begin at the primary care level. This article will provide guidelines for managing nutrition-related conditions at the primary care level and offer resources from Valley Children's Nutritional Services Department.

Evaluating and Diagnosing Pediatric Obesity

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Evaluation and Treatment of Children and Adolescents with Obesity categorizes obesity into the following three categories:

- Class 1 obesity – BMI >95th percentile
- Class 2 obesity \geq 120% or <140% of the 95th percentile or a BMI \geq 35 kg/m² to <40 kg/m², whichever is lower based on age and sex.
- Class 3 obesity \geq 140% of the 95th percentile or BMI \geq 40 kg/m², whichever is lower based on age and sex.

If a child falls within the above diagnostic guidelines, they would be appropriate for a referral to Valley Children's Nutritional Services Department. The clinic offers a one-time virtual healthy eating class in both English and Spanish. If you would like to refer patients to this class, we ask that you mark the referral reason as "obesity" to ensure

they are scheduled appropriately. It should be noted that children <2 years of age are not appropriate for an obesity diagnosis or referral. These children and families would benefit from non-stigmatizing approaches to healthy eating and physical activity counseling offered by their primary care provider.

Evaluating and Diagnosing Malnutrition/Failure to Thrive

Evaluating a patient's weight-for-age and height-for-age is not enough to uncover malnutrition or failure to thrive. Instead, providers should evaluate a child's weight-for-length if the child is less than 2 years of age or their Body Mass Index (BMI) if the child is 2 years or older. Additionally, providers must trend a child's measurements to ensure they are continuing along an appropriate growth curve.

The Consensus Statement of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics/American Society of Parenteral Enteral Nutrition: Indicators Recommended for Identification and Documentation of Pediatric Malnutrition (Undernutrition) serves as a guide to diagnosing pediatric malnutrition. Children whose weight-for-age or BMI falls below the 5th percentile are at risk for a diagnosis of malnutrition and should be closely evaluated by their pediatrician.



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Referrals and Resources

The Nutrition Services Department at Valley Children's Hospital serves as a resource for our Valley Children's-based specialties. Although the Nutrition Services Department only accepts referrals for the virtual healthy eating class, our subspecialty clinics such as GI, neurology, nephrology, endocrinology and many more are supported by registered dietitians who can provide care upon request of the specialist.

We encourage providers to evaluate the child's diet and utilize the patient and family handouts now available on Valley Children's website.

For more information or access to these materials, visit valleychildrens.org/services/nutrition.

Medical Staff News

The following pediatric specialists recently joined Valley Children's:

Gastroenterology

Uwe Blecker, MD

Hospitalist

Carolyn Ferlic, MD

Michael Scahill, MDD

Neurology

Dana Shprung, MD

Primary Pediatrics

Kristine Garcia, MD

Erum Kazim, MD



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