

FEEDING AND SWALLOWING PROGRAM

Le Bonheur Children's Medical Center

Le Bonheur's nationally recognized Feeding and Swallowing program can diagnose a variety of feeding and swallowing disorders in children. The comprehensive program was the first of its kind in the Mid-South and offers a variety of evaluation and treatment methods.

If your patients potentially have a feeding or swallowing disorder, then refer them to Le Bonheur for a specialty evaluation.

Evaluation Methods:

- **Fluoroscopic Evaluation / Modified Barium Swallow (MBS) study** – This study is an x-ray procedure that allows the speech-language pathologist and a radiologist to view anatomy and physiology of the swallowing mechanism. During the test, **the child sits in an upright position** and is given barium liquid and foods mixed with barium. The MBS assesses the following:
 - anatomy and physiology of the swallow
 - laryngeal penetration or aspiration of liquids and/or foods
 - possible techniques to help improve a swallowing problem

This study does not assess for or rule out reflux. The speech-language pathologist interprets the information and makes recommendations for treatment options.

- **The Feeding Clinic** – This clinic is an inter-disciplinary evaluation to determine feeding and/or swallowing problems and the relationship of these problems with other medical and nutritional concerns. The clinic is staffed by a team of child health experts, including a developmental pediatrician, two speech-language pathologists, a pediatric clinical dietitian and a social worker. Children coming to the feeding clinic will have a Modified Barium swallow study during their visit, if medically indicated.
- **Clinical Feeding Evaluation** – This assessment consists of a speech-language pathologist observing the child eat and drink a variety of foods and liquids, as well as performing a comprehensive evaluation of the oral mechanism to examine both structure and function of the oral area as it relates to feeding abilities.

Treatment Options:

After an assessment is completed, there are various treatment options available based on the patient's age.

- For children ages **birth to three years of age**, a referral to early intervention services may be appropriate.
- If a child is **over three years of age**, a referral for feeding therapy can be made to the department of Rehabilitation Services at Le Bonheur Children's Medical Center. Rehab Services offers individual and group feeding therapy sessions to target oral aversions, behavior issues related to feedings, sensory defensiveness related to feeding and transition to oral feedings from tube feedings. The group session meets weekly with an average of four children per group and therapy is conducted in cooperation with an occupational therapist.

Referral Process:

- **Modified Barium Swallow study:** Call Centralized Scheduling to schedule an appointment at (901) 572-3073. You will then need to fax a physician's order with a diagnosis to (901) 937-3335.
- **Feeding Clinic:** Call Centralized Scheduling to schedule an appointment at (901) 572-3073. You will then need to fax a physician's order with a diagnosis to (901) 572-5183.
- **Clinical Feeding Evaluation and Feeding Group Therapy:** Fax a physician's order to Rehab Services at (901)572-4686. The order needs to include a diagnosis and demographic information to schedule an appointment.

**For questions or more information, please
contact Speech Pathology in Rehabilitation Services
at (901) 572-3171.**

