

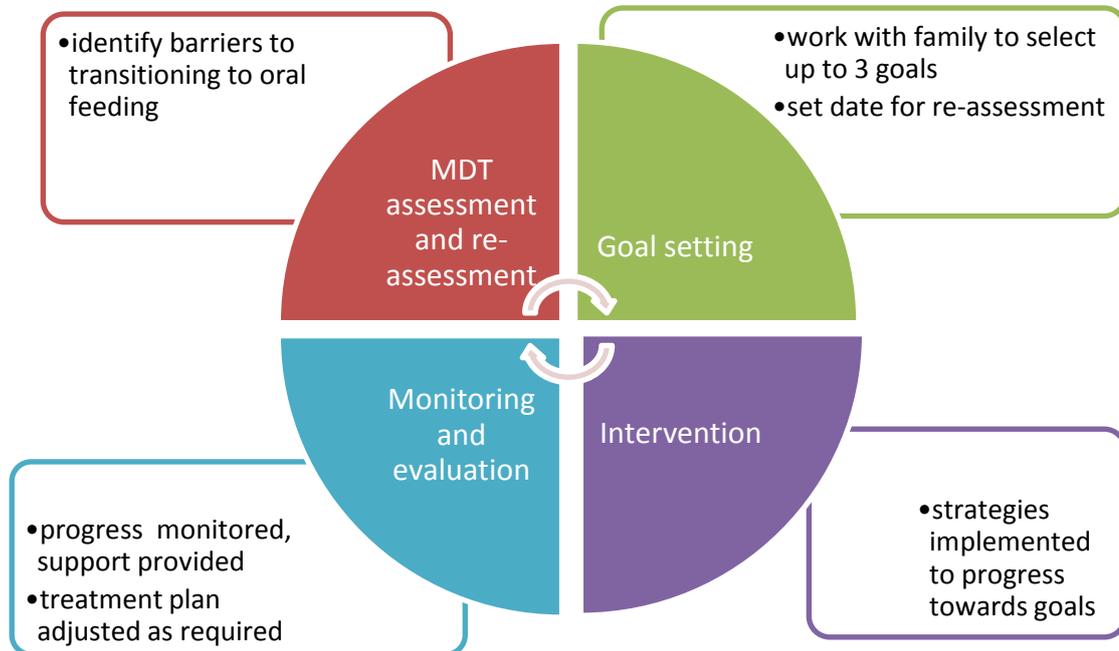
Moving from tube feeding to oral feeding

For your child to change to oral feeding, it is important to think about the reasons why the tube was inserted. Some reasons could be:

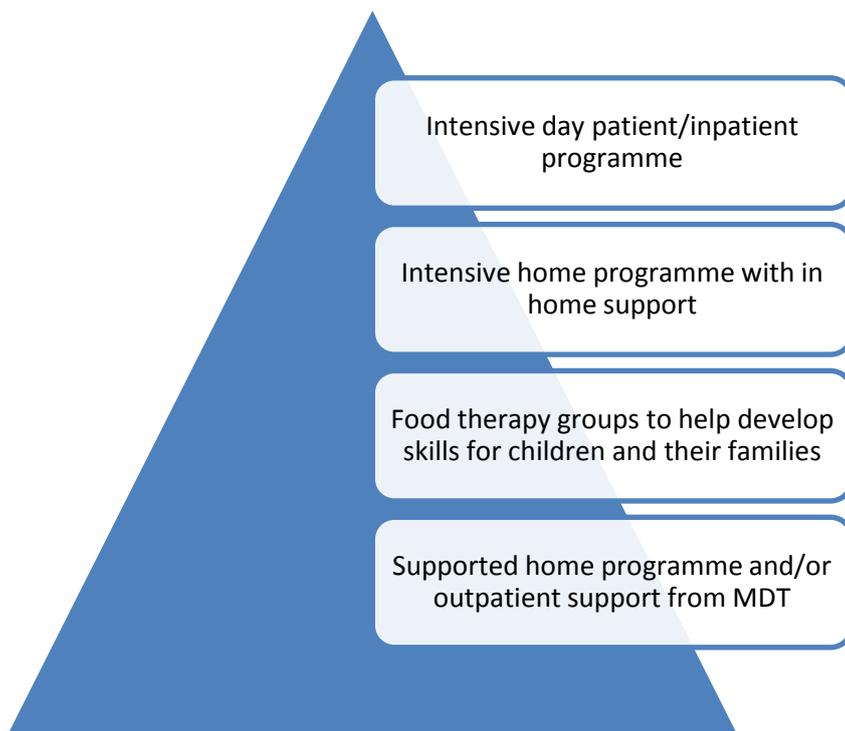
- Feeding safety – your child has not been able to swallow food or drink safely
- Feeding adequacy – your child has not been able to eat or drink enough to grow well.
- Feeding efficiency – your child was not able to eat or drink enough in a reasonable time frame
- Feeding development – there has been a delay in the development of your child's feeding skills and abilities
- Feeding behaviour – feeding is not a positive and enjoyable experience for you or your child

It requires specialist skills from your health team to work out if your child's feeding difficulties improved or resolved. Your health team might include your child's Paediatrician, Home Care Nurse, Speech and Language Therapist, Dietitian and sometimes an Occupational Therapist and Psychologist. This team is often referred to as a multi-disciplinary team (MDT). The MDT will assess how your child is doing medically. They will also look at how your child is growing, eating and drinking. For example weight, length, swallow safety, feeding skills and abilities along with their feeding behaviour. This information is then discussed with the whanau. Goals can then be agreed with the whanau and MDT that will help your child to progress. Your health team will provide advice and strategies to help your child work towards these goals. For example, changing the tube feeding plans to allow for your child to develop hunger, advice on food texture and consistency and behavioural feeding patterns. A date for a re-assessment to review your child's progress should also be agreed.

Assessment cycle for consideration of transition from tube to oral feeding

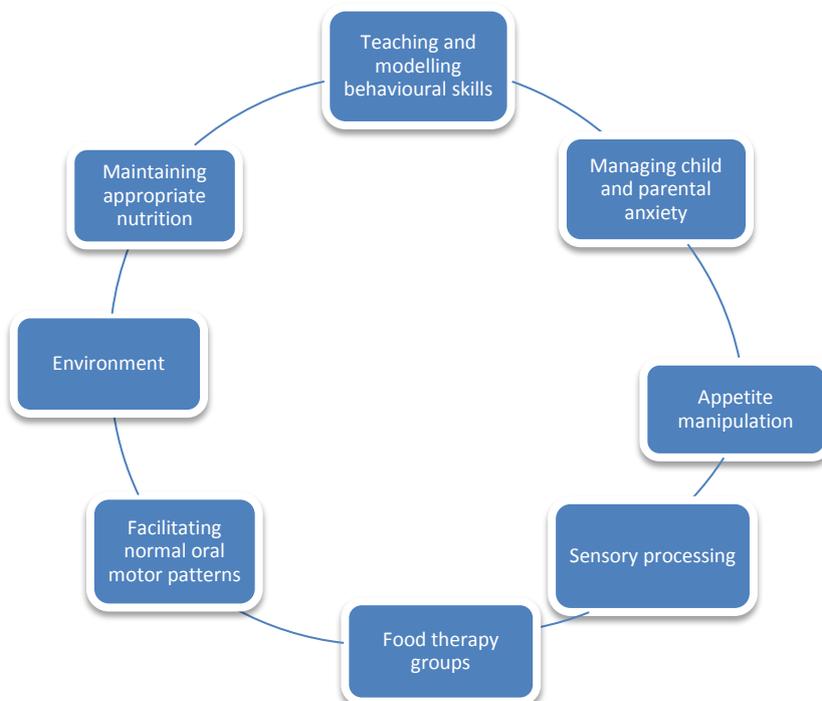


Most tube weaning takes place in the home with your child and the whanau. Support is provided from MDT members through home visits or at regular Outpatient clinics. Intensive hospital-based programmes over several weeks may be helpful for some children when a home-based approach has been unsuccessful.



A positive relationship between parent –child and readiness of the parent to commence the weaning process, which may be lengthy is very important as is the readiness of your child, with respect to growth, nutritional status and feeding safety.

Fundamentals of oral feeding progression



References:

1. Feeding Difficulties in Children. A Guide for Allied Health Professionals. NSW Government Australia/Health, 2016 Office of Kids and Families