
Interventions for feeding and nutrition in cerebral palsy

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Authors' objectives

The Vanderbilt Evidence-based Practice Center examined the effects of available interventions for feeding and nutrition problems that have been evaluated in individuals with cerebral palsy (CP).

Authors' conclusions

Evidence for behavioral interventions for feeding disorders in CP consists of mostly small, short-term, pre-post studies, with strength of evidence ranging from insufficient to moderate. Some studies suggest that interventions such as oral appliances may enhance oral sensorimotor skills, but there is a clear need for rigorous, comparative studies. Evidence for surgical interventions is insufficient to low. All studies to date demonstrate significant weight gain with gastrostomy. Results for other growth measures are mixed, and substantial numbers of children remained underweight, although given a lack of appropriate reference standards for the CP population, these results should be interpreted cautiously. Longer term, comprehensive case series are needed, as are prospective cohort studies. More research is needed to understand potential harms in the context of benefits and potential risks of not treating.

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