

Treatment Overview for Growth Hormone Deficiency

What is Growth Hormone (GH)?

Growth hormone is important for growth during childhood. This includes building muscles and bones, keeping blood sugar normal, and breaking down fat.

What is Growth Hormone Deficiency (GHD)?

In growth hormone deficiency, the body does not make enough growth hormone. In children, this leads to

- Slow growth
- Delayed puberty
- Being shorter than other children in the same age group and gender

GHD can have many causes:

- **Congenital GH deficiency:** Present at birth (short stature in the family, genetic disorders)
- **Acquired GH deficiency:** Developing it later at anytime during childhood (Chronic illnesses, tumors, brain injury or radiation therapy)
- Unknown causes

[Click for more information about Growth Hormone Deficiency](#)

How is it diagnosed?

During your child's regular check-ups, their height and weight are recorded by the doctor to see how fast they are growing. When a child is growing slower based than other children of the same age/gender, this is considered growth failure. Growth hormone deficiency is usually diagnosed and treated by an endocrinologist. An endocrinologist is a doctor who specializes in children's growth and hormones. Diagnosis requires:

- Blood tests
- Asking about your child's medical history

- X-rays
- Some children need a GH stimulation test

How is it treated?

Growth hormone deficiency is treated with growth hormone replacement. This can help your child's growth catch up and promote healthy muscle, bone, and body composition. Early detection and treatment can lead to better results.

The human growth hormone your child is given is identical to the growth hormone that our bodies naturally make. It is usually given as a daily injection.

What to Expect:

Treatment can be continued for years depending on the patient's needs. Most children can start to see changes within six months of starting growth hormone replacement. Some see changes as early as three to four months. During treatment, regular check-ups are needed to be sure that it is working. The effectiveness of growth hormone naturally decreases over time, so we can expect a slower growth rate as treatment goes on.

