

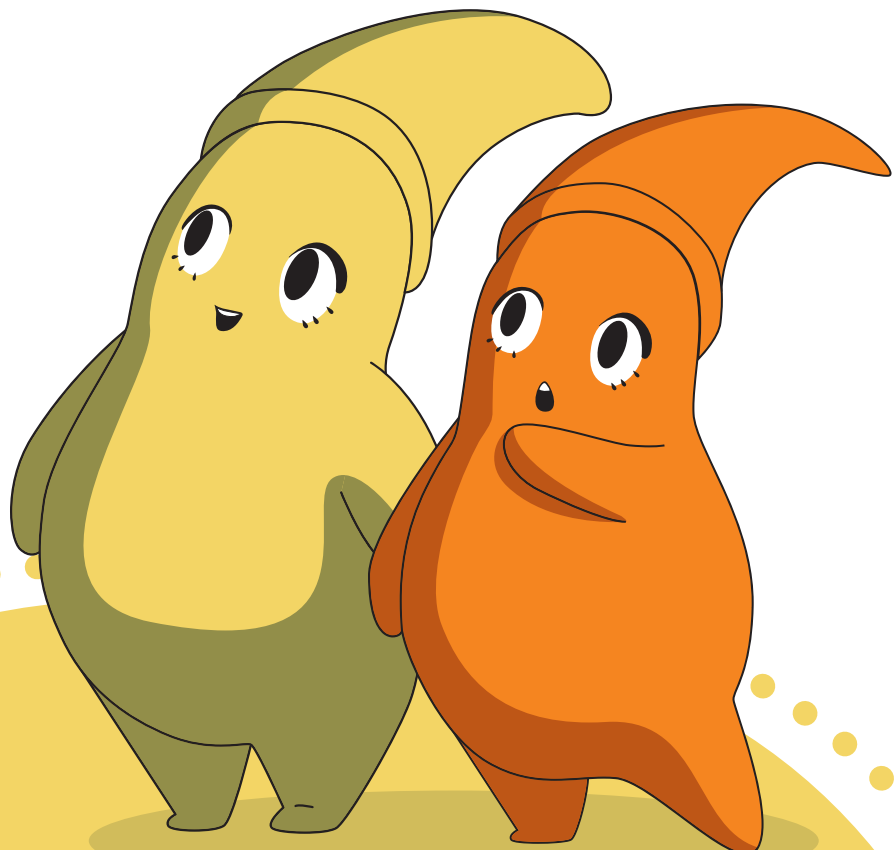


ANZSPED

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
SOCIETY FOR PAEDIATRIC
ENDOCRINOLOGY AND DIABETES

Want to know more about

Short stature



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What is short stature?

Short stature is when a child's height is below the 3rd percentile for their age and sex when plotted on a growth chart. This means on average 3 in every 100 children are defined as short. Short stature is not a problem in itself but sometimes may be associated with other medical conditions. A child's height is always considered with their weight, parental heights and whether they have any other medical issues.





How is it diagnosed?

Short stature is a description of someone's height, it is not a medical diagnosis. Your doctor may ask questions to make sure there is no reason for your child being short that needs treatment.

Questions may include:

- Medical history (e.g. pregnancy and birth history, any medical conditions).
- Symptoms of an undiagnosed medical condition (e.g. hormone deficiencies, gut problems such as coeliac disease).
- Family history (short parents have short children).

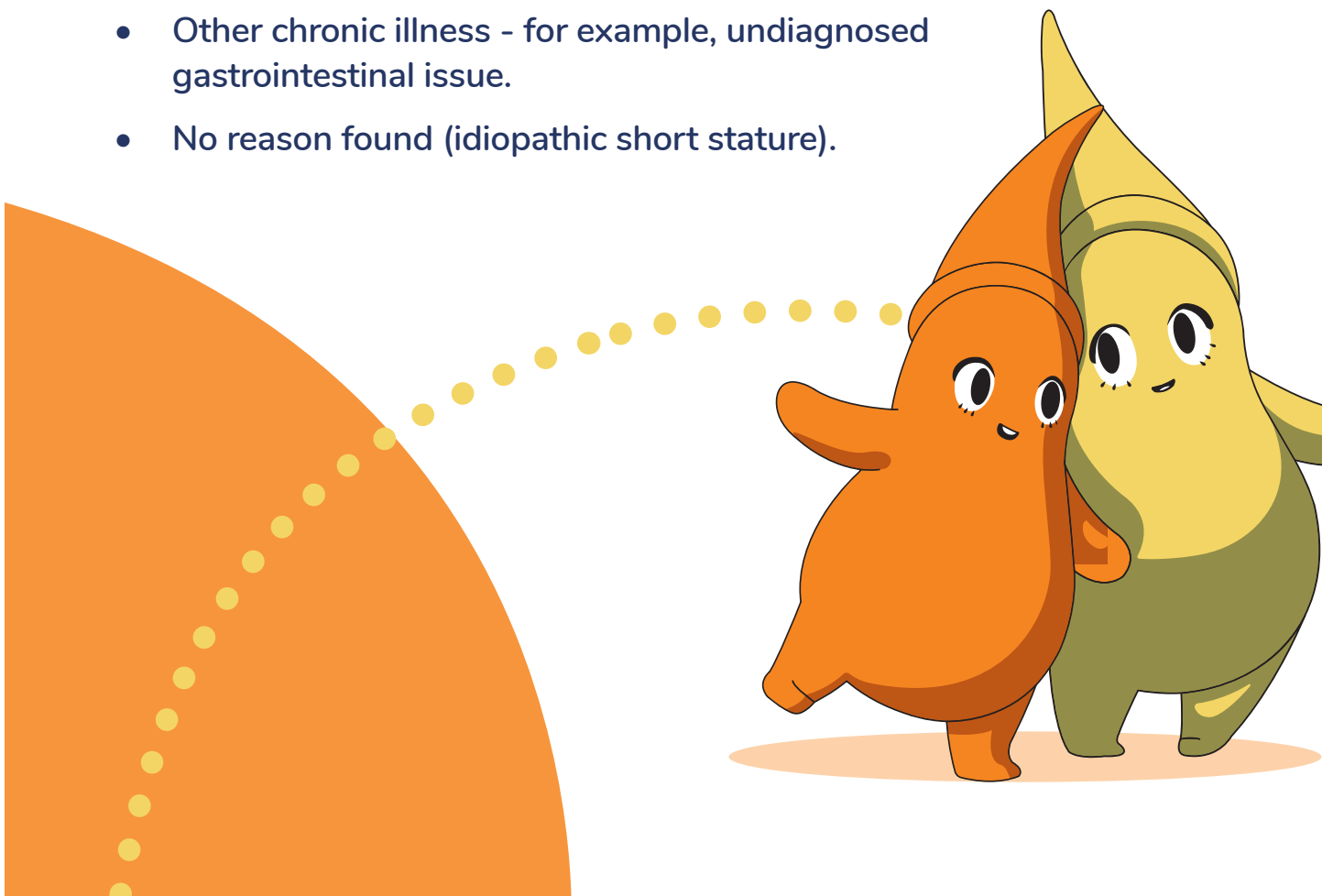
How is it investigated?

Your doctor may examine your child to look for conditions that can affect growth. Depending on what they find, your doctor may ask for your child to have blood tests and a bone age (x-ray of the wrist and hand). Watching growth rate over 6-12 months may be all that is required.

Causes of short stature?

Some reasons for children to be short are:

- Short parents or relatives (called familial short stature).
- Growth delay/late bloomers (constitutional delay of growth and maturation). These children will have their pubertal growth spurt a bit later than other children but will have a final height in keeping with genetic potential.
- Hormonal or genetic causes.
- Other chronic illness - for example, undiagnosed gastrointestinal issue.
- No reason found (idiopathic short stature).



How is it treated?

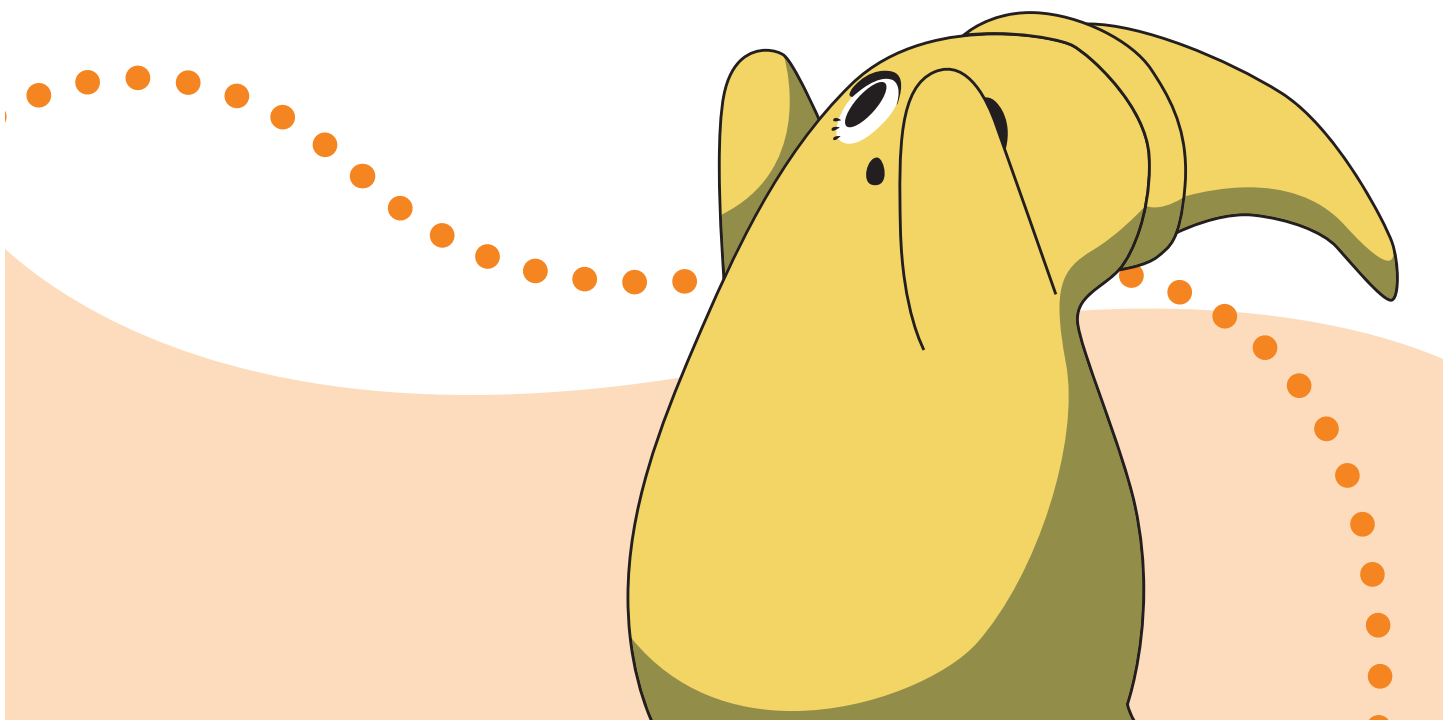
Most children who are short are healthy and do not need any treatment. Your doctor may discuss growth hormone treatment as a possibility. It is good to discuss the pros and cons of treatment with your doctor. If growth hormone is used, it is best to start this early and ideally before puberty, after which growth is almost finished.

How should I explain it to my child?

It is helpful to find out how your child feels about their height, whether they have any worries or are being bullied at school. It is important for them to know about their health and that all people grow differently. Help your child feel good about themselves by focusing on your child's strengths rather than their height.

Disclaimer

This leaflet has been written by members of ANZSPED. It is designed to give you some general information about your child's condition and treatment. If you have any questions about your child's condition and treatment, it is best to speak to your child's doctor or specialist nurse.





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Remember

Most children who are short do not have a medical problem. Monitoring your child's height and weight regularly with your doctor or nurse is important. Speaking to your medical team about other concerns you might have about your child can help pick up any medical reasons for short stature.

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