



TIPS FOR PICKY EATERS

- 1) Respect your child's appetite - or lack of one
If your child is not hungry, don't force them to eat. Don't bribe or force them to eat certain foods or clean his/her plate. This will ignite a power struggle over food, which your child will win. Know what you can control: what is offered, when they eat, and where they eat. Your child is in control of "if" and "how much".
- 2) Stick to a routine
Serve meals at the same time each day. Provide milk with meals and water with snacks. Do not allow your child to fill up on liquids or snacks before a meal.
- 3) Be patient with new foods
Young children often touch or smell new foods, or may even put a bite in their mouths then take it out again. They may need repeated exposure before they actually eat the food. Encourage them to talk about the texture, smell, shape, and color of a food, and not whether it tastes good. Serve new foods along with your child's favorite foods.
- 4) Make it fun
Serve broccoli and other vegetables with a favorite dip or sauce. Cut foods into various shapes with cookie cutters. Offer breakfast foods for dinner. Serve a variety of brightly-colored foods.
- 5) Recruit your child's help
At the grocery store, ask your child to help select veggies. Don't buy anything you know you don't want your child to eat. Encourage your child to help rinse veggies or set the table.
- 6) Set a good example
Eat a variety of healthy foods yourself; your child may follow your example.
- 7) Be creative
Add chopped broccoli/green peppers/meats to spaghetti sauce. Mix grated zucchini and carrots into soups and casseroles. Top cereal with fruit slices.
- 8) Minimize distractions
Turn off the TV during meals. Decrease any other distractions.
- 9) Don't offer dessert as a reward
Withholding dessert sends the message that dessert is the best food, which might only increase your child's interest in sweets. Select one night a week for desserts. Redefine dessert as fruit, yogurt, or other healthy choices.
- 10) Don't be a short-order chef
Preparing a separate meal for each child after they reject the original meal may promote picky eating. Encourage your child to stay at the table for a designated meal time, even if they don't eat.

If you are concerned that your child's picky eating is compromising his growth or development, please schedule an appointment with us to evaluate this.