

Picky Eaters Tips



Patience and persistence are the tools for parents of a picky eater. Your tenacity to make nutrition a priority will pay off in the long run as your child grows and begins to form food associations, preferences and priorities. Your guidance and role modeling will be a positive and formidable influence. (but you can't see it right now, so hang in there and don't give up.)



- * Don't despair. That leads to frustration and stress at meal times. That doesn't help you or the child. Be patient there is no magic solutions because kids, like us adults, have different personalities, tolerance levels, patience, moods etc. So in other words, what works for one child may not work for another.
- * Introduce one new food at a time. Introduce it with another food they enjoy.
- * Don't make your child clean their plate. Forget that old fashioned way of thinking. We now know that kids, especially under five, have a good sense of their hunger. They will stop eating when they are full. The portion size they were given may be too much for them.
- * Avoid bribing please! ie "If you eat your vegetables, you can have dessert later." Think about the message that will send to your child. Dessert- reward, fun, happy, success. Vegetables, not fun, requires a condition in order to eat them, Multiple studies have shown that bribing kids doesn't promote good healthy food preferences in the long run.
- * Just try to offer them one bite of the healthy food they don't want to eat. If your child refuses, don't give up or get mad. It just means they won't try it today but that does not mean forever. Keep bringing that vegetable back to mealtime every several days or so.
- * Take advantage of other activities to expose your child to healthy foods outside of mealtime. Have them help you pick out the vegetables and fruits at the grocery store, or better yet, at the farmers market, Maybe the farmer will tell your child how they grew it. Let them help prepare the foods. I know I have said this before, but it can take kids 15 exposures before their curiosity is piqued enough to try a new food.
- * Be a fun healthy eating role model. The kids are watching you and paying attention. Pile on those veggies on your plate and let them know how delicious it is. A little extra acting is okay. You have an audience!



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* It's okay for kids to have a dessert or high sugar, high fat food once in awhile. Avoid completely eliminating a food they enjoy. It will only make them want it more. Instead, teach your child how these foods are good to have once in a while. Help them learn to eat small portions of these kinds of foods. We have to be realistic. Being healthy is about moderation, balance and portion sizes. There is room in a child's diet for all kinds of foods. Some every day and other once in while. When there are independent tweens/teens they will be making their own food choices.



Home is a chance to teach children good eating habits and that includes teaching them about these high sugar foods and high fat foods.

* Avoid letting your child snack all day long. If they aren't very hungry at mealtime they are less likely to try new foods.

* Make the foods interesting. Jazz up those vegetables and fruits. Kids love dipping foods, so how about adding a low fat dip for their vegetables or fruits. Serve them their vegetable with a vegetable made of into a picture or funny face. Just imagine their faces when they sit down and see a happy smile made of celery, carrots and cucumbers. Make fruits and vegetables a fun event for kids. Have them color their plate with the food item. See if they can name the different colors. You can come up with different games using fruits and vegetables that can peak their interest about the food.



* If you find a couple of vegetables that they do like, well, it is okay to repeatedly serve them. Just continue to introduce one new food at a time.

* To add more nutrition for that stubborn picky eater who absolutely refuses to eat vegetables or fruits, be creative. You can add vegetables into some of their favorite meals. Dice them finely and add these healthy foods to their favorite meatloaf, stew, soup, casserole dish or pasta.

