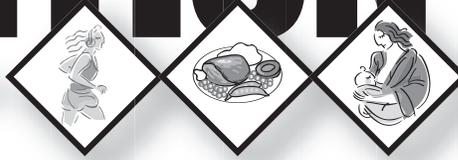


NUTRITION

On Your
Own

Self-Paced Lesson

SP -000-35 02/12



Picky Eaters - Making Peace with Food

Tips to Help Your Child Become a Healthy Eater

Picky eating is common in toddlers and preschoolers. Picky eating can occur as young children are learning to be independent. Here are some examples of picky eating.

Do you see any of these behaviors in your child?

Some children may:

- **Not be willing to try new foods. It's normal for young children to prefer foods that they are used to and to be afraid to try new foods.**

Example, "Michael will only eat peanut butter, crackers, and milk."

- **Choose a couple of foods they like and refuse to eat other foods for a short period of time.**

Example, "Bananas used to be Sam's favorite food. Now, he won't even touch them."

- **Refuse to eat certain colors and textures of foods.**

Example, "Chris won't eat anything green, just because of the color."

- **Act distracted and uninterested in eating.**

Example, "Sophia doesn't sit still at the table. She can't seem to pay attention long enough to eat a meal."



IN THIS LESSON, WE'LL ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

- **What is picky eating, and why does it occur?**
- **What are some ways I can handle picky eating?**
- **How can I get my child to try new foods?**



The good news is picky eating is normal and should go away with time.

Before we share these tips to help your child become a healthy eater, let's think about mealtimes with your family.

THINK ABOUT MEALTIMES WITH YOUR CHILD AND ANSWER THE FOLLOWING.



1. I often reward my child with things like books, small toys, stickers, play time, but not with food.

- Yes
- No

2. I provide healthy food choices and let my child choose the foods he will eat.

- Yes
- No

3. I try to set a good example by eating a variety of healthy foods myself.

- Yes
- No

4. I try to sit down and eat meals with my child as often as possible.

- Yes
- No

5. When I offer new foods, I also give a food that I know my child likes.

- Yes
- No

6. I try to keep mealtimes happy and stress-free.

- Yes
- No

7. I usually only give my child water to drink between meals and snack times (not milk, juice, or soda).

- Yes
- No

8. I try to offer a new food again even if my child did not try it the first time.

- Yes
- No

9. I usually offer three meals and two or three snacks at about the same time each day.

- Yes
- No

10. I let my child decide how much to eat and whether or not to eat.

- Yes
- No



FOR EACH OF THE QUESTIONS YOU ANSWERED “YES” – GOOD JOB!

These are great ways to help your child become a healthy eater.

FOR ANY QUESTIONS WHICH YOU ANSWERED “NO,”

read the tip below to help your child become a healthier eater.

1. I often reward my child with things like books, small toys, stickers, play time, but not with food.

Try not to give food as a reward. Rewarding with sweets may cause your child to “prize” those foods. It also encourages eating when not hungry.

2. I let my child choose the foods he will eat from the healthy choices I provide.

You should decide what foods are offered and when your child eats, but let your child decide how much to eat, even if he decides to eat very little or not at all. Remember that sometimes a child needs to see a new food 15-20 times before he will try it.

3. I try to set a good example by eating a variety of healthy foods myself.

Set a good example by eating a variety of healthy foods yourself. Your child will eventually begin to try more foods, but he is more likely to do so if he sees you eating and enjoying them.

4. I try to sit down and eat meals with my child as often as possible.

Sit down and eat meals with your child. Children usually eat better when not eating alone.

5. When I offer new foods, I also give a food that I know my child likes.

Offer one new food at a time and serve it with something you know your child likes. Try offering new foods at the start of a meal when your child is most hungry. It is normal for young children to prefer familiar foods and reject new foods.

6. I try to keep mealtimes happy and stress-free.

Mealtimes can be frustrating, especially when your child won't eat. Try to keep mealtimes pleasant. Children eat better in happy surroundings.

7. I usually only give my child water to drink between meals and snack times (not milk, juice, or soda).

Try to offer only water between meals. Other drinks like milk or juice may fill up your child's tummy and keep your child from being hungry for food at meal and snack times.

8. I try to offer a new food again even if my child did not try it the first time.

Continue to offer new foods along with foods your child likes. Remember that it may take 15-20 tries before your child will accept a new food.

9. I usually offer three meals and two or three snacks at about the same time each day.

Regular meal and snack times are important, especially for children because their stomachs are small and can't hold very much food at one time. If your child doesn't eat at mealtime, just wait until the next scheduled snack time to offer foods.

10. I let my child decide how much to eat and whether or not to eat.

Try not to make special meals for your child. If your child refuses to eat the meal you serve, don't worry, just wait for the next snack time. Your child will eat when he/she is hungry, so try not to force your child to eat.

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Self-Paced Lesson Survey / SP -000-35

CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- 1. True or False? It is normal for preschoolers to prefer familiar foods and to reject new foods.**
 - True
 - False
- 2. Which of the following is not a picky eating behavior? (check only one)**
 - “Chris won’t eat anything green, just because of the color.”
 - “Sophia used to love bananas. Now she won’t eat them.”
 - “Catherine will not drink milk because it makes her tummy hurt.”
 - “Michael will only eat peanut butter, crackers, and milk all the time.”
- 3. True or False? Picky eating behaviors may occur when young children are learning to be independent.**
 - True
 - False
- 4. True or False? It is more important to get your child to eat a new food than it is to keep mealtimes happy and stress-free.**
 - True
 - False
- 5. True or False? Involve your child in choosing and preparing new foods, like fruits and vegetables, because they are more likely to try foods they have helped prepare.**
 - True
 - False
- 6. In the future, do you think you can help your young child try one new food using a tip from this class?**
 - Yes
 - No
 - I’m not sure
- 7. Please write down one thing you will try with your child during the next month to help them become a healthy eater.**



GET YOUR CHILD EXCITED ABOUT TRYING NEW FOODS

- **Make it a game.** Play a game of food taste-testing when your child has friends over.
- **Let your child choose healthy foods he wants to try, like a new fruit or vegetable, when shopping.**
- **Let your child help you prepare meals or snacks.** Children are more likely to try foods they have helped to prepare.
- **Make it fun!** Cut foods into shapes with cookie cutters. Make faces out of food. Name food dish after your child. Every now and then, make breakfast food for dinner.