



...because health matters!

Nutrition Matters

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A Guide To Picky Eaters

Sensible strategies to get from "yuk" to "yum".

- 1) Seek out a clean bill of health. If you are panicked by how long it's been since a vegetable passed your child's lips, take her to her doctor to make sure she is healthy.
- 2) Your job is to make food available; your child's job is to eat. This is the basic rule when there is a picky eater in the house; it allows you to control the wholesomeness of the child's diet while leaving him the power to choose how much he eats.
- 3) Think of weekly, not daily intake. Some days a child will eat little, other days they will eat all day.
- 4) Keep portions child-size. To a child, a pile of food can look very overwhelming.
- 5) Expect children to go on food jags. Food jags are normal among kids of all ages. And the less you make of them, the faster they will stop. A child who demands a grilled cheese sandwich everyday most likely does so because she finds comfort in its familiarity.
- 6) Substitute fruits for vegetables and vice-versa. If your child won't eat vegetables but will eat fruit, don't despair. We often forget that of the four food groups, fruits and vegetables belong to the same one.
- 7) Children hate it when foods touch. Food squeamishness often becomes an issue around the ages of 3, 4 and 5 years. Try to go along with what your child wants - unless it's very demanding of you. That may be the opening move of a power struggle.
- 8) Set some rules - then don't start negotiating. If your child knows he can't beg, cajole, or plead with you to change the rules, he'll come to accept them.
- 9) Appetites grow with age. A child will eat more as she grows.
- 10) Decide how long the children will sit at the table. Picky eaters will not eat more if forced to remain at the table. However, make sure they know the consequences of leaving the table i.e. How long until he can eat again? Will his plate of dinner await him?
- 11) Don't make dessert a reward. In the short run, this may make your child eat up, but in the long run, she will come to detest the food she is forced to eat.
- 12) Eat the same foods as your kids. Sit down together to eat. Turn the T.V. off.
- 13) Bring beverages out last. Kids with small appetites can get thoroughly filled up with a drink before dinner.
- 14) Limit junk food.
- 15) If at first you don't succeed..... A study of 4 to 5 year olds at a daycare centre showed that if you "try, try again" a child may come to like a new food.



Palate Pleasers for Preschoolers

- Kids love to dip! Serve pieces of fruit with a sweet-yogurt dip; try vegetable sticks with salad dressing.
- Make exotic sandwiches using bagel chips, waffles, or peeled apple slices instead of bread.
- Experiment with different kinds of breads.
- Add shredded vegetables such as carrots or zucchini to ground beef and make into patties for burgers.
- Make "taster" platters using small portions of your child's favourite foods mixed together with new foods.
- Create friendly names for foods: broccoli trees, bunny salads, mashed potato sand castles, apple-sauce soup.
- Let your child choose the vegetables he wants to add to homemade soups.
- Have breakfast for dinner... or vice-versa. There are no rules as to what foods should be eaten when. Serve waffles with fruit for dinner; pizza or potatoes can be a healthy morning meal.
- Serve sliced fruit or applesauce on pancakes.
- Stuff celery sticks with shredded vegetables mixed into cottage cheese, peanut butter, tuna salad, or any other food your child loves.
- Make a meal with foods that all share the same basic shape; for example, at one meal, serve meatballs, pasta circles, and peas.
- Make a rainbow-coloured meal for your child with foods of different colours.
- Make a meal with a theme that's based on your child's favourite story. For **Goldilocks & the Three Bears**, for example, try three pieces of meat in different sizes, three piles of peas, and three portions of potatoes.
- Keep foods soft so they are easy for your child to chew.
- Entice your child to taste new foods. Start the meal with the food you would like him to try. Save familiar foods for the second or third course.
- Cut up small pieces of fruit and stir into frozen yogurt, ice milk, or ice cream.
- Let your child bring her favourite stuffed animal to the dinner table so it can watch her eat up all her food.
- Serve vegetables as a snack instead of during the meal. Put fresh peas, carrot curlers, or snow peas in a cup and let your child munch away.
- Wrap foods in tortillas for an easy, quick pick-up meal.
- Add shredded zucchini or carrot to potato-pancake batter.
- Keep portion sizes small. You can always offer seconds.
- Serve food in miniature forms: mini meat loaves, mini waffles, mini muffins - they're more kid friendly!
- Cook a meal with your child, let them stir, drop veggies into the pot etc.
- Cut sandwiches into playful shapes such as stars and hearts.
- Serve vegetable juice one night instead of vegetables.
- Change the setting. Dine picnic-style in the living room.
- If your child won't drink milk, add nonfat dry milk to such foods as tomato sauce, eggs, and soups.
- Use ground meat to make bite-size meatballs instead of hamburgers. Dip them in ketchup.
- Place juice in a cup and freeze to make juice pops. Add sticks for handles when juice just begins to freeze.