

Tips for Dealing with a Picky Eater

Respect Your Child's Appetite Or Lack Of It!

A child might eat less food one day while the next day will eat double the amount. This is a normal eating behavior during growth development. As long as your child is getting a variety of foods throughout the week, he or she will be on the right track to appropriate growth development. But don't try to force or bargain with your child into eating certain foods, as this will only cause a power struggle with food and might lead to having anxiety feelings associated with food. So, instead, offer small portions and a variety of foods to provide nutrients.

Introduce and Reintroduce Food

PATIENCE... PATIENCE Did I mention have patience! Your child might need 10-20 times exposure to a certain food before he or she likes it. Try preparing or cooking food in different ways such as grilling it, sautéing it, boiling it, baking it, or have them dip vegetables in a tasty dip or sauce. Focus more on talking about the food's color, shape, aroma, and texture, not so much the taste. Make sure to serve a new food with a familiar food, this way your child is not taken off guard with the new food offered and is more willing to try it.

Meal Times

Have regular set times for meals and snacks! This will prevent skipping meals or overloading on snacks. Provide milk or 100% fruit juice with meals and only water with snacks to prevent from suppressing or decreasing appetite. This will promote child to eat regular meals and not just fill up on fluids.

MAKE IT FUN!



Use cookie cutters to create fun sandwiches! Prepare some "MINION" turkey sandwiches or "MICKEY MOUSE" peanut butter sandwiches for lunch using those cookie cutters. Kids will love this idea and might not even notice it is the same meal because they will be more focus in the exciting shape of it.

BE CRAFTY

Sneak in vegetables in your child's favorite dishes, such as casseroles, pastas or pizza. This is a great way to secretly get kids to eat vegetables. Bake some carrot muffins or a zucchini bread! Make a veggie quiche or sweet potato fries and with a Greek yogurt dip. Hosting a kid's birthday party? Try making some cauliflower buffalo wings with a yogurt dip for a healthier choice.

DON'T OFFER DESSERT AS A REWARD

This only encourages poor eating habits that could transition into adolescents. This can also promote that dessert is the best part of the meal so instead of offering dessert as a reward, try making a healthy dessert that will provide nutrients to your child. Try making a parfait with Greek yogurt and top it off with fruit, and BOOM, dessert is ready to go!

AVOID BEING A COOK TO ORDER CHEF!

This only encourages picky eaters to continue with this eating behavior pattern because it caters to the child's eating habits. It also limits the opportunity to try new foods. So, instead, have your child sit at the dining table during dinner time even if the child is not hungry or doesn't want to eat the food offered. This will promote the consistency of regular meal time schedules. This also encourages your child to participate in conversation time during meal times and will promote family bonding time.