

HELPING YOUR PICKY EATER

If your toddler suddenly won't eat foods they once enjoyed, refuses to try anything new or only eats a few different foods, you're not alone. These are common experiences among parents of young children. It can be frustrating and worrisome. Here are some strategies that may help.

5 TIPS FOR PARENTS

1. Involve Them

Let your child help plan and prepare a few meals each week. As a result, they may be more willing to try new things.

2. Keep Offering Variety

If your child refuses to eat something the first time it's served, don't give up. It may take more than 10 attempts for them to get used to it.

3. Let Them Explore

Allowing toddlers to "play" with their food can help them get comfortable with different textures and flavors.

4. Don't Force It

Pressuring your child to eat something they have refused to eat more than they want can backfire and result in other problems.

5. Lead by Example

Show your child that you enjoy eating a variety of healthy foods. It not only sets a good example but can create opportunities to talk about healthy eating.

In most instances, a "picky eating" phase is relatively brief and isn't cause for concern. However, if this is not true for your child, discuss the situation with your pediatrician.

Originally posted March 2025, written by Justine Habbian, Ph.D., R.D.N.

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