

Healthy Tips for Picky Eaters



Do any of the statements below remind you of your child?

- "Ebony will only eat peanut butter sandwiches."
- "Michael won't eat anything green, just because of the color."
- "Bananas used to be Matt's favorite food, but now he won't even touch them."

Your child may eat only a certain type of food or refuse foods based on a certain color or texture. He or she may also play at the table and may not want to eat. Don't worry if your child has some picky eating behaviors. Picky eating behavior is common for many children from the age of 2 to 5 years. As long as your child is growing as the doctor suggests, he or she is most likely eating enough to be healthy. If you have concerns about your child's growth or eating behavior, talk to your child's doctor.

How to cope with picky eating

Your child's picky eating is temporary. If you don't make it a big deal, it will usually end before school age. Try the following tips to help you deal with your child's picky eating behavior in a positive way. Check the ones that work for you and your child.

Talk about the colors, shapes, and textures on the plate.

- Let your kids be "produce pickers." Let them pick out fruits and veggies at the store.
- Have your child help you prepare meals. Children learn about food and get excited about tasting food when they help make meals. Let them add ingredients, scrub veggies, or help stir food.



- **Offer choices.** Rather than ask, "Do you want broccoli for dinner?" ask "Which would you like for dinner, broccoli or cauliflower?"
- Enjoy each other while eating family meals together.

 Talk about what family members did during the day, what made you laugh, or what you did for fun. Turn off the TV and keep phones away from the table to focus on family time.
- Offer the same foods for the whole family.

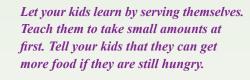
 Serve the same meal to adults and kids. Let them see you enjoy a variety of healthy foods.



Trying new foods

Your child may not want to try new foods. It is normal for children to reject foods they have never tried before. Here are some tips to get your child to try new foods:













They learn from watching you. Eat fruits and vegetables and your child will too.

Offer new foods many times. Sometimes, new foods take time. Kids don't always take to new foods right away. It may take up to a dozen tries for a child to accept a new food.

Make food fun!

Help your child develop healthy eating habits by getting him or her involved and making food fun! Get creative in the kitchen with these cool ideas. Check the ones you try at home, and be sure to add your own ideas, too!

	☐ Cut a food into fun and easy shapes with cookie cutters.	
	☐ Encourage your child to invent and help prepare new	
	snacks. Create new tastes by mixing two or more food groups together to make interesting pairings.	
	☐ Name a food your child helps create.	
Make meals and memories to	gether. Make a big deal of serving "Maria's Salad" or "Peter's Sweet Potatoes"	

for dinner.

Make meals and memories together. It's a lesson they'll use for life.



☐ Our family ideas to make food fun:		

For more great tips on these and other subjects, go to: ChooseMyPlate.gov/preschoolers/