

# WHEN THEY JUST WON'T EAT!



Picky and unpredictable eating is a common and normal phase for many young children. It is just another step in the growth process! Your role as a caregiver is to provide a variety of healthy foods in a relaxed and structured environment, and your child's job to decide how much and if they want to eat.

## Tips to Overcome Picky Eating!

### Structure meal and snack times -

Serve three meals and two to three snacks each day at specific times and resist giving your child food and beverages whenever they want. In between meals and snack time, stick to water. This will ensure that your child is hungry when it is time to eat.



### Phrases that can help -

What you say to your child may affect their food choices. Instead of asking, "Would you like green beans for dinner?" try, "Which would you like for dinner: green beans or broccoli?" Then allow your child to choose how much of these foods to eat.

### Start with just a spoonful -

Your child is in a phase of slow and steady growth and likely has a smaller appetite. Provide only one to two tablespoons of food so they don't become overwhelmed. If your child asks for more, then offer it.

### Minimize distractions -

Avoid mealtime distractions by turning off the television and not bringing toys or books to the table.

### Make meals a stress free time -

Keep the conversation centered on fun and happy things. If meals become a time of stress, your child may develop unhealthy attitudes about food.



### Have them help in the kitchen -

Make your child feel good about doing something "grown up" by having them help in the kitchen with small jobs. Children are less picky, learn more and develop confidence when they help make the foods they eat.



# Trying New Foods

## Be patient -

Children don't always like a food the first time they see or taste it. Don't give up; it may take 10 - 15, or more, attempts before your child accepts a new food.

## Just a taste -

It is common for children to touch, smell and taste new foods. Encourage your child by asking them to describe the smell, texture and aroma - rather than asking them if it tastes good.

## Offer one new food at a time -

It is less overwhelming to your child when they are introduced to only one new food at a time. In fact, serving a new food with a food they already enjoy may increase their acceptance.

## Offer new foods first -

Your child may be more accepting of a new food if it is offered at the beginning of a meal, when they are most hungry.

## Be a role model -

Get the whole family involved in trying new foods. Then together, describe the taste, texture and smell.



## Make food fun -

Try cutting food into fun shapes using cookie cutters or giving fruits and vegetables fun and creative names.

## Healthy snacks with a twist!

These snacks not only taste delicious, but also are fun to make.  
So go ahead and get the kids involved.



**Frozen Bananas:** Insert a wooden stick into a peeled banana (larger bananas may be cut into halves). Then wrap the banana in plastic and place into the freezer. Once the banana is frozen, remove the plastic and enjoy your cold treat!

**English Muffin Pizza -** Top one half of an English muffin with sauce, chopped veggies and low-fat mozzarella cheese. Heat until the cheese has melted and enjoy!

