

FitFUTURE

Strategies for
Better Living.

Getting Picky Eaters

on the Healthy Path



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Is your child a picky eater? First, you're not alone. Secondly, most children who are perceived as picky eaters probably have adequate diets. What parents often perceive as picky eating just reflects a child's normal response to newness. Little kids are naturally skeptical of anything new or foreign, and this includes food. It is normal for children between the ages of two and five years to resist eating new foods. They may also have only a few favorite foods that they readily accept.

While it can be frustrating when your child only wants to eat waffles for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks, relax and be patient. You should know that there are some effective ways you can help make healthy foods like fruits and vegetables all-time favorite choices in your home.

Here are some helpful tips:

Start early

It's important to expose your child to healthy fruits and vegetables at a young age. Food preferences that children develop in their early years remain fairly

stable and are reflected by the food choices they make in later childhood.

Be patient and don't give up

Parents who get discouraged by children who are picky eaters often stop trying to give them new foods, which could lead to future health problems.

Research has shown that in most cases, parents can help their children learn to like new foods through multiple exposures of new food items.

Just offer new foods often, asking your child to try a bite

in a positive and supportive way. Although it doesn't always happen, studies have shown that children will eventually learn to like the new food being offered.

Eat healthy yourself

Food preferences are significantly related to foods that mothers like, dislike, and never taste. So, the more excitement and enjoyment you express about fruits and vegetables, the more likely your child will too.

Don't restrict foods too much

Research also shows that not allowing

children to eat certain foods only raises their desirability for that food. So help children learn that healthy foods like fruits and vegetables are "all the time foods" that they can eat anytime, and that foods like candy and desserts are "sometimes foods" that they can eat once in a while.

Make healthy foods available

As long as you keep healthy snacks like fruits and vegetables around instead of junk food, your child can learn to like and choose them.

Make it fun

Try a taste test, let your child pick out something new; have theme-night dinners. Get your kids involved in planning and preparing food in age-appropriate ways. Find creative ways to enjoy meals and snacks together.

