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## Dealing with picky eaters

An effective way to make sure your children eat enough fruits and vegetables is to sneak them into foods you know they like

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MANY parents have to deal with a picky eater at some point of their lives. Which isn't necessarily a big problem, as picky eating is generally only a temporary phase in child development.



However, if the behaviour persists for too long, then you might start to worry about your child's unbalanced diet - which could lead to health problems and bad food habits later in life.

So, here are some tips that might help you resolve this issue before it becomes a bigger problem.

### 1) Walk the talk

As a general rule, if you want your children to eat healthy, you should set an example in the first place. Both parents should then eat nutritious and balanced meals to show the children the way.

### 2) Don't give up!

When you try to introduce new healthy foods, there will be some that your children will like immediately and others that they'll start enjoying only after trying them several times. So, if you prepare some new foods that your children are afraid to try, just continue serving them on a regular basis and show that you eat and enjoy them. At some point they may feel ready to try as well.

### 3) Don't force them to eat

It's important not to force your children to eat something they absolutely dislike as this might end up being counterproductive and transforming the meal into a stressful experience for you all.

So, you should serve your kids the same meal as the rest of the family, but you shouldn't force them if there is something they really don't want or try to remove from the dish (such as parsley or garlic).

#### 4) Don't show your apprehension

If your kids are going through a phase where they don't eat enough, try not to look anxious and don't insist too much, as they may feel your apprehension and become even more stressed.

They may also start using food as emotional blackmail - for example by refusing to eat every time they seek your attention - which will make the situation even worse.

#### 5) Play with them

Kids like playing, right? So transform their meals into a game between you and them if you can.

For example, you could involve them in meal planning by going to the market together and choosing which fruits and vegetables to buy. You can also choose together what to prepare and cook as a team. They'll be so proud to eat a meal they prepared themselves!

#### 6) Create healthy challenges

And because kids like games and challenges, you could also create healthy challenges.

For example, you could play the "rainbow game": create a meal with as many colours as possible!

Another option is the "veggie challenge": the kid eating more vegetables will receive a special prize.

#### 7) Check for food intolerances or allergies

If your kids are refusing to eat a certain food, this may also be a sign that they could be intolerant or allergic to it. They may feel bad after eating it but may be unable to communicate this to you.

You should then check if after eating certain foods your kids have any reactions such as rushes, digestive discomfort, tiredness, dizziness or mood changes. In fact, these are all possible signs that your child may have a food intolerance or allergy.

#### 8) Hide vegetables in their favourite foods

An effective way to make sure your children eat enough fruits and vegetables is to sneak them into foods you know they like. Some examples? Banana pancakes, pumpkin and mango smoothie or cauliflower hummus.