

10 tips for parents of PICKY EATERS



When it comes to raising healthy kids, there's almost nothing as important, or sometimes as frustrating, as what you feed them. Here are a few strategies to help you make meal times with your little ones as easy, pleasant and nutritious as possible.

1. Remember who is in charge of what at meal time

Parents decide when, where, and what foods are offered. Kids decide how much (if any) food they want to eat from what parents are offering.

2. Keep kids on a meal and snack schedule

Avoid letting kids (and grownups!) mindlessly graze between meals. Too much munching between meals can prevent kids from coming to the table hungry and ready to eat.

3. Don't be a short order cook

Offer at least one food at meal times that you know everyone likes, but don't give alternatives beyond this. If kids know that there won't be an alternative meal, they'll work harder to like the foods you offer.

4. Let kids serve themselves when possible

From a young age, kids are good at gauging how much food will satisfy them. Serving food on the table "family style" can allow children to portion their own food.

5. Set a good example

Remember, your kids are watching you, and will follow your example at mealtimes. Make sure that you are modeling eating behaviors that you would want them to adopt.

6. Watch out for beverages

Avoid giving children sweetened beverages like soda, and limit juice to 4-6 ounces of 100% juice per day. If your child is not hungry at meal times, check to see if they're filling up on beverages during the day.

7. Don't give up! Keep offering new foods

Kids need to see and experience foods multiple times before learning to like them, so don't give up if your first try isn't a success. Offering new foods a few times helps kids get used to seeing them, and more likely to eat them.

8. Serve foods in a variety of ways

Give kids carrot "grass" (shredded carrots) instead of sticks, or serve them with their green tops still attached. If your child loves chicken nuggets, try serving grilled chicken cut into nugget-sized pieces, or breaded fish sticks to mimic the texture of chicken nuggets. Dig out the cookie cutters and cut fruits, veggies, and cheeses into fun shapes.

9. Have kids help with prep work

Kids who help in the preparation of their meal are more likely to try the finished product. Have kids help pick out produce at the grocery store, and provide them with kid-friendly kitchen tasks, like cracking eggs, stirring batter, or washing vegetables.

10. Offer dips

Kids love dunking foods in dip, so use this to your advantage! Serve favorites like hummus, salsa, or ranch dressing with unfamiliar foods to encourage kids to try something new. Try our fun, veggie dip recipe!

SUPER HERO VEGGIE DIP

- ¼ cup fresh spinach, washed and dried
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh chives
- ½ cup plain yogurt
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Put the all ingredients in a food processor, spinach first. Puree until desired consistency.

More resources:

www.ellynsatterinstitute.org/

www.realmomnutrition.com/

www.choosemyplate.gov