



PICKY EATING



Picky eating is not uncommon. It often occurs from age 3 to 5, but can continue for many years.

Children often like to explore food rather than eat it. Usually it is a phase that children go through and then grow out of over time.

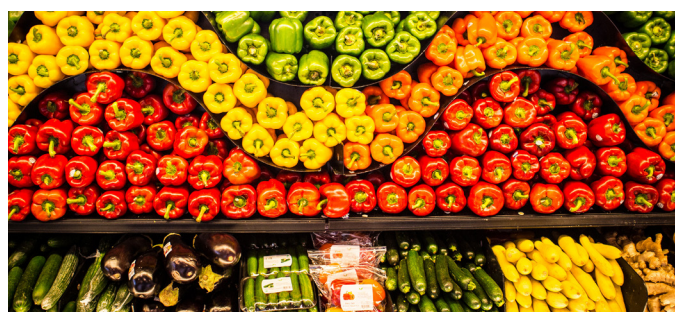
Children often refuse foods because of color or texture rather than taste. Teaching your child to explore foods and describe them rather than just judge “like or dislike” can help him or her learn to enjoy wide variety of foods. Here are some other suggestions for helping raise an adventurous eater:

- Offer new foods many times. It may take up to a dozen tries for your child to accept a new food.
- Small portions = big benefits. Let your child try small portions of new foods that you enjoy. Give him or her a small taste at first and be patient.
- Be a good role model by trying new foods yourself. Describe tastes, textures and smells.

- Offer only one new food at a time. Serve something that you know your child likes along with the new food. Offering too many new foods all at once can be overwhelming.
- Offer new foods first, at the beginning of a meal, when everyone is the most hungry.
- Serve food plain if that is important to your child. For example, instead of a macaroni casserole, try meatballs, pasta, and a vegetable. To keep different foods separate, try plates with sections. For your child, the opposite might work and serving a new food mixed in with a familiar item could be helpful. Get to know your child's preferences.

AT HOME ACTIVITY

Who usually does the shopping in your family? If your child rarely or never goes to a grocery or market he or she may not have a sense of the array of food choices available to him or her. Next time you go shopping bring your child with you and let him or her choose one healthful food he or she has never eaten before.



LOVIN' LUNCH

Lunch is an important daily event, but for picky eaters this can sometimes be a challenge! Talk to your child about his or her lunch preferences. If your child prefers cold lunch, is there a fruit or vegetable you could add to his or her bag? If your child prefers hot lunch, encourage him or her to try the fruits and vegetables offered. Check your school district's website for lunch menu nutritional information. Don't forget the low-fat milk. It's a great choice with hot or cold lunch.