



PICKY EATERS? HERE'S WHAT TO DO.....

Patience and persistence are the tools to use for dealing with picky eaters. Our tenacity to make nutrition a priority will pay off in the long run as children grow and begin to form their food tastes, preferences, and choices. It may take multiple exposures before a child's curiosity is peaked enough to try a new food.

The important guidance and positive role-modeling that adults provide is a critical influence in helping develop children's diet habits. Often, the payoff isn't seen right now or even next week or next month; but hang in there and don't give up. Efforts will pay off --- it just may take awhile.

1. Try not to despair. This leads to frustration and stress at meal times, which doesn't help anyone. Be patient --- children, as well as adults, have different tolerance levels, moods, personalities, etc. What works for one person may not work for another.
2. Don't make children clean their plate. We now know that children, especially under the age of five, have a good sense of their hunger. They will stop eating when they are full.
3. Avoid bribing, ie, "If you eat your vegetables, you can have a treat later." Think about the message that you would be sending to the child. Dessert means reward, fun, happy, success. Versus vegetables, which mean not fun, punishment, force. Many studies have shown that bribing children doesn't promote good healthy food preferences in the long run.
4. Just offer one bite of the healthy food they don't want to eat. If they refuse, don't give up forever or get angry. It just means that they won't try it today, but that doesn't mean forever. Keep bringing back the vegetable to mealtime every few days or so.
5. Take advantage of other activities to expose children to healthy food outside of the mealtime. Have them pick out the vegetables and fruits at the grocery store or farmer's market. Let them help prepare the foods.
6. Show children a fun healthy eating role model in yourself. Children watch and pay attention to you. Pile on the vegetables and let them know how delicious they are. Ham it up; you have an audience!
7. Make the food fun and interesting. Children like dipping foods, so encourage them to dip their veggies in dip or dressing. Because vegetables and fruits are colorful, arrange them on the plate to automatically provide a lot of eye appeal and interest.

WWW.NOURISHINTERACTIVE.COM

This great website is a free one-stop resource for fun nutrition games for kids and interactive nutrition tools and tips for parents and educators to use to promote healthy eating for the whole family. Created by nutrition and health care professionals, Nourish Interactive's nutrition education website gives children and families the knowledge and skills they need to make healthy choices. Check it out!

For more information, contact us:

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