



Picky Eaters

If you have a child who is a picky eater, know that you are in good company. Experts say that possibly half of all two-year olds fall into this category, and there is evidence to suggest that for some it can continue through adolescence.

Preschool-age children are particularly prone to being picky eaters - they like the foods they like, so why bother with anything else? Getting your picky eater to sample new foods reminds me of Charlie Brown hitting his head on the wall. Good grief!

- **Stop talking about it: stop worrying about it!**
The harder you try to force food on a child, the less likely he will want to eat it. The more you talk about it, the more tightly your child will hold her lips closed. Do not comment on what the child is or isn't eating. Not one word.
- **Use different plates.**
In addition to offering small portions, serve your picky eater on smaller plates and use small utensils. Bread plates are less threatening, Occasionally serve a meal or a snack on a party plate. In so doing the emphasis is taken off the food and put onto the fun plate.
- **Offer a few choices.**
Smorgasbord snacks and meals, including bite-size servings of a variety of choices, make the child feel powerful in choosing for himself. Too many choices can be overwhelming, so offer two and no more than three.
- **When introducing a new food item, don't put it on your child's plate.**
Instead, place it on a separate plate away from him, and don't make a big deal about it. He may or may not be willing to give it a try, but you won't have sabotaged the possibility by showing your investment in his trial. If by some miracle the child wishes to try the new food, give him a very tiny taste.
- **Introduce new foods when your child is definitely hungry.**
Hungry children are more likely to risk trying something new.
- **Invite 'guests' to join you.**
Occasionally invite a favourite doll, stuffed animal, or puppet to join you for dinner. Allow the child to encourage the guest and model how to eat.
- **Involve the child in preparation.**
This might make him willing to give it a try. Daddy exclaiming, "This is delicious. Who in the world made it?" can be a real motivator.