

Nutrition Guide

Is your child a picky eater?

Feeding guidelines for concerned parents

How concerned should you be that your child is not eating well?

Like all parents, you only want the best for your child. You want him/her to grow up strong, smart, and successful, and you understand how important a balanced diet is to achieve these goals.

While your child does eat and your pediatrician explains that his/her growth is reasonable, you are concerned that your child appears small relative to other children and that he/she may not be getting enough food or all the right nutrients for optimal growth and development. Even though your child may not eat fruits and vegetables every day, chances are he/she is getting enough of all the nutrients required for normal growth and development. There are, however, a few things you can do to improve your child's eating habits and gain peace of mind.



What can you do to help your child?

- Set up a feeding schedule for your child that includes 3 meals and an afternoon snack every day; the meals and the snack should be 3-4 hours apart and take place at the same time every day.
- Do not allow eating, snacking, “grazing,” or drinking milk from the bottle between meals; provide only water between meals – offering anything else between meals will only decrease your child's appetite.
- Minimise distractions during feeding, such as toys, books, or television.
- Provide a calm environment for eating.
- Adopt a neutral attitude to eating behavior: avoid excess praise, criticism, or stimulation.
- Encourage your child to eat independently and tolerate age-appropriate messiness during meals.
- Introduce new foods one at a time and wait a week between the introduction of each new food. Never coerce or force-feed your child; pressuring a child to eat rarely works and often creates a very stressful feeding environment for the whole family. It can also disrupt the parent-child relationship, which can negatively affect your child's development.

The information provided in this fact sheet is intended to be used as a guide only. Please consult your doctor or dietitian for personalised advice.



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If you apply these principles, you should be confident that you are doing the right thing for your child at mealtime, and the overall mealtime experience should become more relaxing for you, your child, and the entire family.

Family matters

Food is such an important part of family life. Try to have meals with the whole family at the table. Seeing other family members eat and enjoy their food will encourage your child to eat as well.

Importance of nutritional support

If you are still concerned about your child's food intake, speak with your doctor about adding a nutritional supplement to your child's diet. Providing a supplement for your child may lessen your concerns and allow you to have a more positive experience with your child at mealtime.

You have taken the first step to help your child – and your entire family. Over time, by implementing the guidelines described in this fact sheet you should feel increasingly confident that your child is getting all the nutrients he/she needs and will grow up healthy. And meals can become a stress-free, enjoyable family event!

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