

THE ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY TOT'S LINE NEWSFLASH ON "PICKY EATERS"

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Did you know...
**That there are two types of fussy eaters and
that picky eating can be caused by genetics.**

According to a recent study, fussy eaters may fall into two different groups. The first group is neophobics who are unwilling to try unfamiliar foods. The other group is unwilling to eat a variety of relatively familiar food. Researchers examined the eating habits of 5,390 pairs of twins between 8 and 11 years old and found children's aversions to trying new foods are mostly inherited. According to Dr. Lucy Cooke of the department of Epidemiology and Public Health at the University College London, 78 percent of childhood neophobia is genetic and the other 22 percent is environmental. {American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, August}



Ways To Get Your Child To Try New Foods

1. **Get your child interested.** Have your child learn about the food by using their senses. For example, have your child try different fruits and vegetables by focusing on colors. Declare a "red day" and have your child pick 1 red fruit and vegetable to bring home and try.
2. **Keep introducing the food.** Kids don't always take to new foods right away. According to www.kidsoutandabout.com, studies show that it can take 15 to 20 tastes of a particular food before a child will actually swallow it. They may say yuck at first, they may eventually touch it, watch you eat it, put it in their mouth and spit it out.
3. **Offer smaller portions.** A Child's appetite is smaller than an adult's appetite. Keep in mind, a child's stomach is approximately the size of a child's fist. If your child likes the new food item, you can always put more on their plate.
4. **Offer one new food at a time.** Too many foods at a time can be overwhelming.
5. **Offer a variety of healthy food throughout the day.** This will ensure they are getting the proper nutrients for proper growth and development and you won't feel as anxious if they leave food on their plates throughout the day.
6. **Introduce a new food with a well liked food.**
7. **Offer new foods at the beginning of the meal when your child is the most hungry.**
8. **Serve food according to your child's preference.** Some children like to keep the different foods separate and some like to mix them together.
9. **Let children dip their food or put toppings on their foods.** Dips and toppings include apple-sauce, cream cheese, low fat vegetable dressing, peanut butter, yogurt, fruit preserves, and tomato sauce.
10. **Let you child drink it.** Make a fruit smoothie.
11. **Cut it up in shapes with cookie cutters.**
12. **Offer a nibble tray.** Offer a variety of bite size finger foods with playful names. For example, call thinly sliced apples, apple moons.
13. **Encourage your child to get involved in planning and preparing meals.**
14. **Be a role model.** Eat a variety of healthy foods.
15. **Do not pressure or force your child to eat.** This causes the child to hate mealtimes and may cause problems later in life.

As the caregiver, you play the biggest role in your child's eating behavior. What you say has an impact on developing healthy eating habits. Negative phrases can easily be changed into positive, helpful ones.

Phrases that Hinder

Instead of ...

Eat that for me.
If you do not eat one more bite, I will be mad.

Phrases like these teach your child to eat for your love and approval. This leads your child to have unhealthy behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs of foods.

You're such a big girl, you finished all of your peas.
Look at your sister. She ate all of her bananas.
You have to take one more bite before you leave the table.

Phrases like these teach your child to ignore fullness. It is better for kids to stop eating when full or satisfied than when all of the food has been eaten.

See, that didn't taste bad, did it?

This implies to your child that he or she was wrong to refuse the food. This can lead to unhealthy attitudes about food and self.

No dessert until you eat your vegetables.
Stop crying and I will give you a cookie.

Getting a food treat when upset teaches your child to eat to feel better which can lead to overeating.

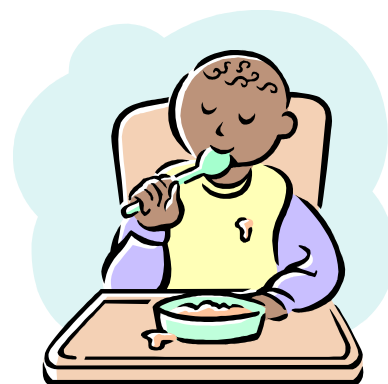
Phrases That Help

Try...

This is kiwi fruit; it's sweet like a strawberry.
These radishes are crunchy.

Phrases like these help point out the sensory qualities of the food. This encourages your child to try new foods

Is your stomach telling you that you're full?
Is your stomach still making its growling hungry noises?
Has your tummy had enough?



Do you like that?
Which one is your favorite?
Everybody likes different foods, don't they?

Phrases like these make your child feel like he or she is making the choices. It also shifts the focus toward the taste of the food rather than who is right.

We can try these vegetables again another time. Next time would you like to try them raw instead of cooked.

I am sorry you are sad, come here and let me give you a big hug. Reward your child with your attention and kind words and spending time together.