



The 5 P's for Parents of Pickies

Five suggested tips to help your picky eater become less persnickety.

1. **Predictability.** Establish set meal and snack times and stick to them. Eliminating “grazing” throughout the day helps your child arrive to each meal hungry and motivated to eat what you provide. Eat family meals at the table as often as possible.
2. **Patience.** Most children require repeated exposure to a food before they take a first bite or develop a taste for it. Encourage your child to explore foods’ colors, textures, shapes, aromas, and tastes. It takes time for children’s eating habits to change, but the small steps you take each day can help encourage a healthy eating for the long run.
3. **Participation.** Children are more likely to try new foods when they are involved in selection and preparation. Involve your child in selecting vegetables and fruits from the grocery store. Using age-appropriate skills, solicit their help in the kitchen with preparation.
4. **Positivity.** Set a positive example and provide a healthy environment for your child. Children learn to enjoy the foods their parents enjoy too. Don’t keep foods in the home you wouldn’t want your child eating. Alternatively, if you are making healthy changes to your diet, offer your children the same benefits. There is no greater myth than the assertion that ice cream and candy are just part of childhood!
5. **Perseverance.** Stick with it. Just because your child protests, doesn’t mean preparing a separate meal is necessary. In fact, this promotes picky eating. During the toddler years children may not have much of an appetite or might rather play than eat. Encourage your child to enjoy mealtime with the family, even if he or she chooses not to eat. Continue to present healthy food for meals and snacks until they become familiar and preferred.

Adapted from Mayo Clinic. Provided by Brie A. Moore, Ph.D. for Kensie Cooks .