

Picky Eaters and Introducing New Foods!

http://cradacl.bc.ca/profiles/drupalexp_orane/modules/contrib/media/images/icons/default/application-octet-stream.png

Picky Eaters versus Problem Feeders

Picky Eaters:	Problem Feeders:
Decreased variety of foods that will eat	Restricted variety of foods
30 foods or more	Usually less than 20 different foods
Foods lost due to “burn out” because of a food jag** are usually re-gained after a 2 week break	Foods lost due to food jags** are NOT re-acquired
Able to tolerate new foods on plate and usually can touch or taste a new food (even if reluctantly)	Cries and “falls apart” when presented with new foods
Eats at least one food from most all food texture groups	Refuses entire categories of food textures
Will add new foods to repertoire in 15-25 steps on ‘Steps to Eating’ hierarchy*	Adds new foods in more than 25 steps*
Does not need intensive therapy	Needs intensive therapy



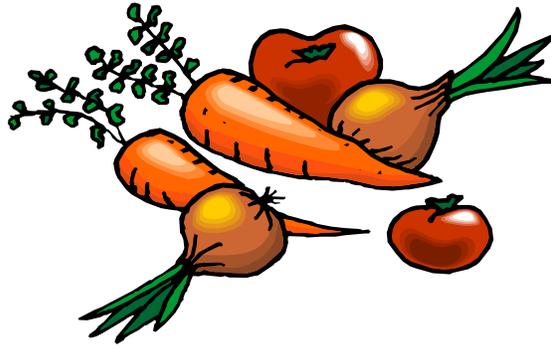
How?

- ✦ Introduce a good variety of foods early
- ✦ Respect individual food preferences, don't force children to eat
- ✦ Up to 2 years of age, new foods need to be introduced 8-15 times to enhance acceptance, offer foods again and again
- ✦ Present food in appealing ways, combining colour, shape and texture
- ✦ Serve very small portions of the new food along with child sized servings of well-liked foods
- ✦ Encourage children to become more familiar with different foods by helping grow, buy, prepare and serve them

When?

- ✦ Observe the time of day your child takes new foods most easily, when she/he is most hungry, not tired or excited
- ✦ Serve new foods when children are with peers
- ✦ Provide regular meals (3 meals/day) and snacks (2 hours between meals)

- ✦ Serve water between meals and drinks at the end of meals



What role do parents play?

- ✦ Be a good role model, eat with your children and choose healthy foods
- ✦ Don't use food as a reward (eg. offer dessert as a reward for finishing vegetables)
- ✦ Don't encourage food jags
- ✦ Separate rejection of you vs rejection of your food
- ✦ Consider giving a daily multivitamin or supplement when child is missing a food group
- ✦ You choose when (eg. 3 meals a day, at table for 30 minutes max), where (eg. in a booster seat at the table) and what (offer variety) your child will eat.

What role does your child play?

- ✦ Your child chooses how much and if they will eat
- ✦ It is okay if your child misses a meal occasionally



*See "Steps to Eating" handout by Kay Toomey, 2002

**Food Jags: Some children, especially those with feeding difficulties, prefer to eat the same food the same way every day or at every meal. This is known as a "food jag". The main problem with food jags is that children will eventually get bored or burned out on these preferred foods. Once children with feeding difficulties shun the preferred foods they've been jaggging on, these foods are typically lost out of that child's food range – permanently. They may then continue this process of eliminating foods until they

have very foods left in their food repertoire. To prevent food jags, it is important to only offer any one particular food ONLY every OTHER day (NOT every day).