



FEEDING YOUR “PICKY” EATER

Share the responsibility:

Parents and children have different roles in feeding. Follow these guidelines to help your child learn to eat a variety of food.

Parent’s Job

Decide **what** to eat

- Cook one meal for the family (not different items for each person). Over time, children with picky eating habits will learn to eat the same foods as the rest of the family.

Decide **when** to eat

- When food is served at set times, children are more likely to come to the table hungry.

Decide **where** to eat

- Children will develop healthier eating habits when meals are eaten together at the table.

Child’s Job

Decide **whether** and **how much** to eat:

- Your child will know if she is hungry or full.
- Trust your child to eat the amount that is right for him.
- Do not pressure your child to eat if she says she is not hungry. Offer another eating opportunity (snack or meal) in 2 to 3 hours.
- Provide smaller portions at first. Give second helpings if your child asks.

It is common for children to avoid foods they dislike or want specific foods for even weeks or months.

Steps You Can Take:

1. Keep meal times relaxed

- Let your child use her hands to eat; manners will develop over time
- Keep conversation light and fun

2. Eat together at the table

- Mealtimes are a good regular time to connect as a family
- Role model healthy eating
- If you have an infant or toddler who uses a high chair, bring the chair as close to the table as possible

3. Avoid distractions

- Turn off electronics, TV’s, radios
- Remove books and toys from the table

4. Avoid all forms of pressure to eat

- Take the stress off yourself and your child by dividing responsibility (see guidelines on the left)
- Do not give rewards (bribes) to eat
- Do not give penalties for not eating

For more information on healthy eating for young children:

- *Dial-a-Dietitian* 1-877-830-2892
- <https://www.ellynsatterinstitute.org>
- http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/healthy_eating/agesstages/children.html