



PICKY EATING

Parenting Tips & Tricks

Children's sense of taste develops over time. From Birth - 3 months, babies can tell the difference between sweet and bitter tastes. From 3 - 6 months they use their tongues to make sense of different textures and tastes, and around 5 months are able to taste salty foods. As babies shift from milk to solid foods their taste buds work with their brains to decide what they do or don't like. Genetics affects this as well.

Habits That Help:

- model good eating habits for your children. If you eat healthy, they often will too.
- have older siblings be role models. Children often do what siblings do.
- have regular mealtimes as a family
- provide healthy snacks like fruits, vegetables, yogurt, hummus, cheeses especially as their taste buds are developing

How You Can Help:

- Be Patient! Helping children explore and learn to like new foods takes time. *It can take up to 20x for a child to agree to try a new food.*
- celebrate when they try something new (even if they don't like it)
- keep meal portions small... if they ask for "seconds," that's a good thing
- offer a new food along with two foods they like
- honor if they say they don't like it by saying *"It's ok... you can try it again another day."*
- allow children to help with grocery shopping for healthy foods, make it fun at the store, *"Can you find the biggest orange or the reddest apple?"*
- encourage your children to help with meal prep. They are more likely to eat what they've helped prepare. Younger children can wash fruits/veggies & place them in pots; older children can help chop and spice (with supervision)
- give your children choices...
i.e. "would you like carrot sticks or grapes with your lunch?"

