



Solutions for Feeding Your Picky Toddler

Toddlers are naturally picky eaters. They are always on the go, leaving little time to sit down and eat. As a caregiver, you can make sure they eat healthy foods, even when on the go.

Organizing the meals:

- Make your child's meals small and frequent. It is normal for toddlers to eat small quantities at a time.
- Do not offer snacks between meals
- Have the child seated in a comfortable chair/seat where their feet touch a surface
- Supervise all meals
- Keep the meals short and entertaining with music, reading a book or listening to a story. These are healthier options as you also teach your child to limit screen time to less than 2 hours a day after age 2
- Set an alarm or timer to time the meals. This may help to keep your day organized. Timing meals can vary based on your toddler but an average of 15-20 minutes should be sufficient.
- Allow your child to use safe utensils
- Role model for your child. Offer a new food, one at a time. Eat it in front of your child. You will notice that after 3-4 tries, your child will want to try it too. If they don't take to the new food, wait for a couple of weeks, and reintroduce it again.
- In between meals, offer water. Avoid juice or snack bags unless you are on the run. Since your child will be eating frequently throughout the day (4-6 times), you can offer milk or juice as part of the meal.

Creating the right menu for your toddler:

- Occasionally, the texture of food becomes an issue for your child. Below are some options to help introduce your child to a variety of textures:
 - Small pieces

- Dippers: use dips such as hummus, dressing, or sour cream/ yogurt and let your toddler “dip/ dunk “soft vegetables such as cooked carrots or broccoli. This can be done with fruits and yogurt as well.
- Toppings such as cream or melted cheese, guacamole for sliced turkey or cranberry sauce for baked chicken can help make new textures easier for your toddler
- Spreaders: spread some cream cheese or peanut butter (above age 12 months and under supervision of an adult) on some soft bread. Let your toddler smear the spread with a blunt popsicle stick to allow your child to participate in food making and help him/her with their fine motor skills.
- Shakes and smoothies: you can incorporate a number of vegetables (such a spinach, avocado, broccoli, and colored peppers) or herbs (such as mint, fresh basil) into healthy fresh fruit smoothies

Did you know?

- Toddlers should drink a maximum of 16-20 ounces of milk per day.
- Toddlers should only drink 4 ounces or less of any juice a day.
- Toddlers need an iron rich diet that includes red meats, beans and green vegetables.
- It’s ok to give your child a multivitamin, but if they eat a variety of foods, they are probably getting enough vitamins already.

Above all, relax. If you are consistent with the above tips, your child will learn to eat healthy and will continue to grow and develop well.

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