



We Can!® Parent Tips: Picky Eaters



With a picky eater, mealtime can seem more like a battle than a relaxing way to spend time with your family. If waging war over vegetables has pushed you too far, don't give up by dialing for a pizza or cruising to the nearest drive-thru. With these tips, your picky eater can also be a *healthy* eater.

Lead by Example

- As a parent, you are your child's most important role model—especially when it comes to making healthy choices. If you eat healthy and try new foods, your child will, too.

Stock Up on Healthy Choices

- Buy plenty of fruits, veggies, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products.
- Keep healthy foods where they're easy for your kids to see.

Limit Junk Food in Your Home

- Limit the number of foods high in fat and added sugar that you bring into your home.
- Your child won't choose junk food if it's not around.

Don't Force It

- Forcing your child to eat certain foods will only cause stress for you and your child.
- Serve a few fruits and veggies at mealtimes. Let your kids find the foods they like.
- Encourage your kids to try everything you serve.
- Set a "one-bite rule"—Kids must try at least one bite of each food on their plate.

Try New Foods

- Try different textures and flavors to help your kids find foods they like.
- Instead of sliced apple, try sliced avocado or sliced kiwi.
- Instead of carrot sticks, try snap peas, sliced bell peppers, or cucumbers.



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Get Creative

- Add fruits and veggies to foods your kids already like.
- Mix blueberries and oats into pancakes.
- Add sliced fruit to your child's favorite cereal.
- Serve shredded veggies over rice or whole wheat pasta.
- Make smoothies with fresh or frozen strawberries, a banana, and low-fat yogurt.

Make Healthy Food Fun to Eat

- Cut baked chicken, low-fat cheese, and veggies into bite-size pieces. Let kids “dip” these pieces into dunking sauces. Try hummus, low-fat ranch dressing, ketchup, and mustard.
- Cut sandwiches into fun shapes.
- Give your kids the ingredients to “build” their own healthy taco or pizza.

Let Kids Help With Meals and Snacks

- Children are more likely to eat food that they help make.
- Have your kids prepare meals and snacks with you. Let them help—
 - Make the shopping list;
 - Pick out food at the grocery store; and
 - Slice, mix, bake, or cook the food.
- Your kids will have fun and learn about healthy eating.

For more information, visit:
<http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov>
or call 1-866-35-WE CAN.

