

Take the Fight out of Food!



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Picky Eating: Grr! Why is family mealtime such mayhem?



Tanya

This is Tanya. She works full-time and prepares dinner for her family every night. She often struggles to get a meal on the table that everyone will enjoy. One child is quite picky, one doesn't want to try new things, and no one agrees on the foods they like. Tanya knows she has to end the mealtime madness, but isn't sure where to start. She tries the three-step approach:

Spot the problem.

Tanya says: "I'm frustrated trying to make family meals that everyone will enjoy."

Get the facts.

Tanya visits www.dietitians.ca and searches "picky eaters." She reads that parents and children have different jobs at mealtime. Her job is to decide which nourishing foods are served, when dinnertime is, and where they will eat. It's then up to her children to decide what and how much to eat from what Tanya offers.

She quickly realizes that some small changes can make mealtime more enjoyable for everyone. She will try to stop telling her kids to "eat everything on their plate" rather she'll let them choose what or how much to eat. And now she knows not to let the kids decide where they want to eat (which is often in front of the TV instead of at the dinner table). As she continues to read information on Eat Right Ontario and Healthlink BC websites, she learns that:



Dietitian Pro Tip

Nathalie Regimbal
MSc RD

- Keep mealtimes pleasant! Your child's attitude towards certain foods can be related to the mood in which it was served.
- Don't talk about picky eating while at the dinner table. Keep the conversation light.
- Take pleasure in tasting and discovering new foods and over time, your children will imitate your behaviour. You have more influence than you think!

Find a dietitian in your area:
www.dietitians.ca/find

Try This!



No-Bake Coconut & Banana Lentil Energy Bites



Egg, Tomato and Cheese Breakfast Pizzas



Lemon Almond Sautéed Greens



Avocado and Grapefruit Winter Salad

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Picky Eating

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Get the facts (cont'd).

- Up to 35 per cent of toddlers and preschoolers are described by their parents as picky eaters.
- Children take their nutrition cues from their parents, so she can set a good example by preparing and eating nourishing choices.
- Children's appetites can be erratic and that's okay! The amount her children eat will vary each day depending on their appetite, fatigue, activity level and if they are having a growth spurt. It doesn't always mean they are picky – it is normal.
- Getting kids involved with grocery shopping, prepping and cooking food can help them become more interested in trying new things.
- It can take 8-15 tastes or more before a child will like a new food.
- Kids may seem picky or may eat a small amount because they are simply not hungry at meal times.
- It's best to offer three meals and two or three snacks at regular times each day and to make sure kids aren't grazing throughout the day. This will help the kids come to the table hungry since even a little milk, juice or few crackers can spoil a child's appetite.

Seek support.

Tanya feels better knowing that she's not the only mom with picky eaters! She wants to learn more about making mealtime more pleasurable at her house, so she finds a dietitian in her area at www.dietitians.ca/find.

She also learns that her local grocery store has dietitians who offer grocery store tours and cooking classes for kids. She will get her kids more involved in shopping, prepping and cooking meals so they are more interested in it. And she will talk to fellow parents about feeding their children so she learns new recipes and ideas.

Take the Fight out of Food!

Eating should be joyful, not a source of everyday frustration and confusion. If you're fighting with food, try this three-step approach:

1. Spot the problem.

Define what's causing your fight with food first.

2. Get the facts.

Use facts from credible sources to decide what needs to be done to solve the problem.

3. Seek support.

Put the plan into action with support from a dietitian, family and friends.

Find all 5 fact sheets at www.NutritionMonth2017.ca

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