Tips for Picky Eaters

Young children are naturally cautious about trying new things. This can make mealtimes a challenge for both children and parents. Help your picky eaters be more adventurous with food by using these easy tips.

Encourage just one bite— but don’t force it.
Introduce the new food, but allow the child to decide whether to try it or not. Forcing a child to eat can give them negative feelings about that food in the future.

Try, try again.
Continue to offer the new food, even if the child has refused it before. Some children need to see a food 7 or more times before they will try it.

A little play is okay.
Allow children to touch, feel, or even mix their foods together. This process of exploration is rewarding for children. Decide where the line is between exploration and bad table manners.

Get your child involved.
Children are less likely to reject foods that they helped make. Give them small jobs to do, such as tearing lettuce, snapping green beans, stirring pancake batter, or rinsing fresh fruit. At the grocery store, ask your child to name different fruits and vegetables and help place them in the grocery cart.

Try a new texture.
For many children, it is not the flavor of the food they object to, but rather the way the food feels in their mouth. Try preparing vegetables in a new and different way, such as raw, shredded, roasted, or pureed.

Earlier is better.
Start offering a variety of different healthy foods at a young age. Healthy habits formed in the early years tend to stay with us as we grow up.