

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FUSSY EATING



MAY 2023






IMPORTANCE OF EARLY NUTRITION

Fussy eating is a common stage that many toddlers go through. It is natural to worry and assume something must be wrong when your child seems to lose interest in food. Some research suggests **over 50%** of children are fussy eaters at some stage in the early years. Most grow out of it and begin to accept a wider range of food in time. But very occasionally, there might be an underlying problem that's contributing to a sudden loss of appetite

FOOD GROUPS

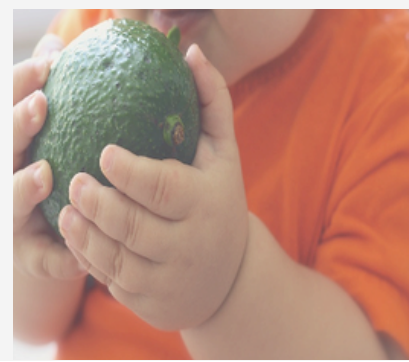
Consider the food groups as outlined in the March Newsletter.

Focus **LESS** on what your child is eating in a day and **MORE** on what they are eating over the course of a week.

-  **Wholegrains**
-  **Fruit and Vegetables**
-  **Dairy Foods**
-  **Protein Foods**

Important to remember that if your child is active, gaining weight and feels well then they are most likely getting enough to eat

Try not to worry even if your child's diet does seem very limited. Research shows that toddlers almost always manage to eat the right balance of nutrients needed for healthy growth and development.



THINGS TO CONSIDER



Is your child filling up on too much milk?

Consuming excessive milk between meals can fill up your child's stomach, leaving them less hungry for other foods. Consider reducing milk intake or switch to water if your child is over 12 months old

Is your child snacking too much?

Regular snacking can reduce your child's appetite during mealtimes. Ideally, toddlers should have no more than two snacks a day, one in the mid-morning and the other in the mid-afternoon

Does your child feel pressured at mealtimes?

Children may reject their food if they sense pressure to eat. If mealtimes are perceived as negative, children may be less likely to want to eat. Therefore, a calm environment is essential.

Does your child feel unwell, tired or too hungry?

All of these factors can affect a child's eating habits, including feeling too hungry. Being too tired or unwell, including teething, can also impact a child's appetite

THINGS TO CONSIDER



Are desserts or treats being used as a reward?

If children are conditioned to believe that they must consume their primary meal to earn a delicious dessert, they may disregard the main course in favour of the sweet treat. Therefore, it is generally recommended to avoid using food as a reward.

Is your child preoccupied?

Is your child playing with toys or watching TV during mealtimes? Are they being overstimulated with an abundance of noise or activity in the surrounding environment? If so, they may be too distracted to eat. Consider eliminating any distractions to see if this helps them focus on their meal.

Is your child eating alone?

Your child may be less inclined to eat if they are eating alone. Conversely, if they routinely eat with a role model eater, it may actually assist them in eating more and overcoming their picky eating phase.

Is there a mealtime routine?

If not, this may be a contributing factor to your child's fussy eating habits. Additionally, it may imply that they have not yet developed their hunger and fullness signals.

STRUCTURE

- 3 meals/day with mid morning and mid afternoon snack
- sit in the same place to eat as often as possible

PERSIST

It can take 10-12 times before a child accepts a new food

ROLE MODEL

- There is a lot of evidence to show that eating together as a family can help improve fussy eating.
- It is also opportunity to talk about food and catch up on everything that has happened during the day.
- Ask them for a spoon of their food and then offer a spoon of yours

CALM

Try to keep your cool even if a meal has not been eaten. If you are anxious and tense, your child will pick up on this and it could make the situation worse. So don't make a fuss – just take the plate away without comment.

SIMPLIFY

- Present simple healthy food
- Include them in the decision but only give two choices; toddlers do not know what they want so avoid asking *"what would you like for dinner"* instead ask *"would you like bolognaise or pizza for dinner"*

FUN

- Play with food together (pasta necklaces)
- Read food picture books
- Cook together

APPETITE

Offer food when they are most likely to be hungry. Some children are starving as soon as they wake up, while others need longer to work up an appetite