

# Mealtimes and Picky Eating



## Addressing Mealtime Behaviors

We know well-balanced diets are important for children. But getting children to sit down and eat for meals can be hard.



## How to Support Your Child

If you have concerns about your child's eating, weight, or growth, **talk with your child's doctor**. There are also others, like mental health providers or nutritionists, who can support picky eaters.



### CONSISTENT AND PREDICTABLE MEALS

- Set a **regular schedule** for meals and snacks. Avoid grazing all throughout the day.
- Create **mealtime habits**. Eat meals in the same place.
- **Avoid distractions** like screens at mealtimes to keep the focus on eating.



### MAKE MEALS FUN

- **Model** eating new foods and enjoying it.
- Ask your child to **help prepare for meals**, like setting the table.
- Serve your child a **variety of foods**, even if they do not eat them all. It is okay if they do not try new foods right away – they may try it next time.



### USE YOUR ATTENTION WISELY

- **Avoid talking negative** about meals.
- If your child complains about foods, **resist scolding**.
- **Praise** any time your child tries a new food, even a small bite.



## Need Help?

If your family needs more help, talk to your doctor.

If your family needs a mental health provider, call the phone number on the back of your child's insurance card. Ask for a list of covered mental health providers in your area, or search for providers on your insurance website.

Scan here for more information about how to find a mental health provider and how to get help in a crisis.



Pediatric **Health** Network

 Children's National.