

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 below or [click 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.**