

# Kids Nutrition

## Picky Eaters Top Ten List



### **1. Cook and serve only what you want your child to eat.**

Don't be a "short-order" cook. You are the parent, so you know what is best for your child. Make meals family events, and serve everyone the same foods. It's okay to have one "safe" item out for the picky child (such as plain bread or rice).

### **2. Eat together as a family.**

Eat meals together as often as possible. Serve the same meal to everyone. Model good eating behaviors by eating a variety of nutritious foods in front of your children.

### **3. Never force a child to eat.**

### **4. Introduce new foods frequently.**

Offer a new food item daily and expect it to take up to 15 attempts with a particularly picky eater before he/she will accept the food. Consider it progress for extremely picky kids if they simply allow the food to sit on their plate.

### **5. Have a schedule.**

Offer 3 meals and 2 snacks at approximately the same time every day. Allow a minimum of 2 hours between meals/snacks. Offer nothing to eat or drink between meals/snacks except water.

### **6. Always eat at the table.**

Serve all meals and snacks at the table with screens turned off. Eat together as a family as often as possible.

### **7. Offer milk with every meal.**

Soda, juice, Kool-Aid, and sweet tea do not add anything nutritious to your child's diet, so they are not necessary.

### **8. Offer foods from each food group at most meals.**

### **9. Limit meal time to 20-30 minutes.**

If your child tantrums, asks for something else, refuses to eat, or gets up from the table, wait 15 minutes and try again. If the problem continues, end the meal or snack and wait until the next scheduled meal/snack time to offer anything (except water). Do not make a big deal out of this or give it attention. Do not make it like a punishment. Just be matter of fact.

### **10. Keep your emotions in check, and stay in control of the situation.**

Give a neutral/unemotional reaction when your child eats poorly. Don't over react. Don't discuss eating or food at mealtime, except for two things: 1) "Do you want more?" and/or 2) "Are you done?" When your child does eat well, give a mild positive reaction such as: "Oh, you must be hungry today. Good eating."

