

Fussy Eaters

Toddlers and young children are often fussy about what and when they will eat. This can be a source of concern for parents who want to see their children grow up healthy. Try to stay calm and focussed when dealing with fussy eaters to prevent bad habits from developing. Toddlers and young children grow slower than when they were infants so they often eat smaller amounts. They often eat erratically with heaps one day and nothing the next. If you are worried about your child not eating enough keep a written record of what they eat for four or five days (without them knowing!) Usually you will find they are getting enough in the long run.

Some Hints For Dealing with Fussy Eaters

- **Let young children have some involvement in choosing** their foods. For example choosing between apples or carrots for a snack. Even at a young age, children will respond to some responsibility and being able to exercise their individuality
- **Its important that snacks are healthy** so that children are getting something nutritious every time they eat and not filling up on sugary snacks like biscuits. This is important because young children have small tummies and big nutrient needs! They need smaller regular meals and snacks to get the nutrients they need for growth and development
- **Assess your child's fluid intake.** Often children who are drinking a lot of milk or juice are getting enough glucose to prevent them from feeling very hungry. A child over 1 year should be having about 2 cups of milk (500ml) a day. If your child is drinking juice, limit this or consider changing to water gradually.
- When serving a meal to children try to ensure there is **plenty of variety** of fruits and vegetables and different foods to choose from and try to **serve up a couple of "sure winners" (foods you know they like)**. This increases the likelihood of them eating enough and prevents you having to get into arguing with them because they have not eaten. **Don't make a fuss if they not eat something.** Act like you don't care if you can!!
- **Keep offering foods every couple of weeks** even if your child seems not to like them. Their tastes are still developing and eventually they are likely to give things a try. Research shows that repeated exposure and role modelling are the two key things for getting your child to eat a variety

REMEMBER: Your role is to provide the healthy food options. Your child has to eat them!! If they don't eat the healthy food available don't be tempted to just give them milk or biscuits because they are "hungry". Keep offering the healthy options. No child has ever starved when food was available!!

Healthy Nibbles for Tots

Nutrition and physical activity Information for Under 5s

For more information visit: www.cph.co.nz

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