

# Picky Eaters

## What is a picky eater?

The peak time for picky eating is the toddler or preschool years. A picky eater:

- may complain or whine about what is served
- refuses certain foods, especially vegetables and meats



## What causes it?

At age 2 or 3, many children are picky eaters. It is normal for most young children to dislike foods with a bitter or spicy taste. Sometimes children dislike foods because of their color, but more often it's because they are difficult to chew. Children accept tender meats better than tough ones, and well-cooked vegetables better than raw.



## How long does it last?

Children who are picky eaters will grow out of it. Being patient is key during this time, allow the child to eat when hungry. If you try to force your child to eat a food he doesn't like, he may gag or even vomit. Forced feedings always interfere with the normal pleasure of eating and eventually decreases the appetite.

## How can I help my child?

- **Don't worry about vegetables, just encourage more fruits.**
- **Encourage your child to taste new foods.** Many tastes are acquired. Your child may eventually learn that she likes a food she initially refuses. Simply serve it repeatedly, allow your child to touch it and play with it, as they are processing what this unknown food is. Often children will not try foods because they fear it. Ask your child to taste it when he is ready.
- **Allow for 'on the go' feeding.** Your toddler or preschooler is constantly on the go and may not be able to sit down for a long structured meal. Instead, leave food out for the child all throughout the day and allow him to eat as he passes by and feels hungry. This is called 'graze eating'.
- **Avoid pressure or punishment at mealtime.** Never pressure, beg, or bribe your child to eat food.
- **Don't argue about dessert.**
- **Don't argue about a bedtime snack. Don't extend mealtime.**
- **Keep the mealtime atmosphere pleasant.** Make it an important family event.
- **Give your child a daily vitamin-mineral supplement.** If you are concerned about your child's intake, give a vitamin supplement. Flinstones vitamins are a great choice to supplement the needs of your child.

