



TIPS FOR FUSSY EATERS

While it can be frustrating when a child rejects the food we give them, it's actually the way that we deal with the situation that impact on their eating habits. It's not ideal to let your child get away with not eating certain foods in order to keep the peace. Giving your children a limited number of foods will only escalate their fussiness, and deprive them of the essential nutrients they need to grow and develop.

Remember, you are not alone! Keep trying out new ideas and eventually you will see positive results.

1. Try making your own versions of healthy fast food favourites using good quality lean meat for burgers, English muffins for pizza bases and a good way to coat homemade fish fingers is to dip them in seasoned flour, beaten egg and crushed cornflakes. For dessert it's easy to make fresh fruit ice lollies from fruit juice and pureed fruits.
2. Some kids can spot a hidden mushroom a mile off, so sometimes the best thing is to be up front about fruit and vegetables, tell them where they come from and why they are so good for you. Giving them facts could make them more interested about what they are eating. Offer a starter - a little teacup or saucer of something new that they could try that would be in addition to their main meal.
3. Reward schemes like a sticker chart in the kitchen can work well with older children. Make the chart yourself perhaps decorating it with pictures of their favourite characters. Give your child a sticker for eating new foods. When they have collected a few stickers, reward them with a prize. The first one should be easily attainable to incentivise your child.
4. Without going to unnecessary lengths, try to make your child's food not only tastes good but looks good too. Make mini portions in ramekins, make chicken skewers or thread bite sized pieces of fruit onto a straw.
5. Avoid empty calorie snacks like crisps or soft drinks and keep a supply of healthy snacks on hand – maybe have a low shelf in the fridge with cut up fresh fruit and other healthy foods. When children are hungry, they won't wait.
6. Children like to assemble their own food, so you could lay ingredients out in bowls and let your child fill and fold their own wraps or choose their favourite toppings for their home made pizzas.
7. Most children adore cooking and tasks like squeezing fresh orange juice or cracking eggs are well within the capabilities of a young child. It's amazing how being involved in the planning and preparation of a meal can stimulate a child's appetite. If your child refuses to eat anything other than junk food, don't worry. They will soon find there's not much point making a fuss if you don't react.