

# UNDERSTANDING PICKY EATING AND STRATEGIES TO HELP



Approximately **25% to 35%** of toddlers and preschoolers are described by their parents as either poor or 'picky' eaters.<sup>1</sup>

While babies have rapid growth, toddlers tend to have a slower rate of growth which may be accompanied by a smaller appetite. During this time, your toddler may become extremely picky and may insist on having the same food item over and over again.<sup>2</sup> This can make it challenging to ensure your toddler has all of the nutrients they need.

## MAKE HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES

- Offer foods full of nutrients: fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives.
- Choose lower sodium options.
- Provide the beverages your toddler needs: water, milk, and if available breastmilk.
- Avoid foods and beverages with added sugar.
- Choose safe food options:
  - » Cut hard to swallow foods into small pieces.
  - » Serve pasteurized juice or milk.
  - » Ensure seafood, meat, poultry, or eggs have been properly cooked.

## THE MACRONUTRIENTS OUR BODIES USE

- 1 | **CARBOHYDRATES** are quickly used by our body for energy. **FIBER** is a carbohydrate, but our bodies don't use fiber as quickly. It helps with digestion and makes our energy last longer.
- 2 | **PROTEIN** helps build muscles and is important for other parts of our body, such as hair, bones, skin, and blood.
- 3 | **FAT** is a core component to building hormones our body needs.

CARBOHYDRATES	FIBER	PROTEIN	FAT
Bread	Vegetables	Meat	Peanut butter
Rice	Fruits	Fish	Avocado
Pasta	Oatmeal	Greek yogurt	Cheese
Cereal	Legumes	Beans	Nuts
Potatoes	Whole wheat pasta & breads	Cottage cheese	Oil & butter

## HERE ARE A FEW STRATEGIES TO HELP YOUR TODDLER THROUGH THE PHASE OF PICKY EATING:

- Introduce one new food at a time and serve it with other foods that they like. Remember that it may take a child up to 8 to 10 tries to accept a new food.
- Let your child help make meals. Children get excited about tasting foods when they have been involved in the preparation, and they can help with rinsing fruits and vegetables, tearing lettuce, or stirring ingredients.
- Share a meal together as a family without distractions like TV and cell phones.
- Make food fun. Arrange food in creative, colorful ways, shapes, or characters kids recognize.
- Avoid pressuring toddlers to eat or punishing them. This may lead them to resist eating even more.



Some children may not be able to meet their recommended nutrient needs from diet alone. Talk to your child's healthcare provider about the benefits of a complete, balanced nutrition supplement, and how it can help support growth and development.



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