

Fussy eating in children: 10 Top Tips

Most children will go through phases of fussy eating or food refusal. Generally, it is not a cause for concern and the phase will pass. Usually, this phase occurs between the ages of 2-5 years. If your child is in this phase, you may experience mealtimes like a “battle” between you and your child. The following tips are helpful in setting up healthy food routines and in managing fussy eating:



1. Offer regular meals and snacks, rather than letting your child pick at food during the day. Try to have meals at roughly the same time each day so that your child knows what to expect.
2. Be aware of the amount your child is drinking. It is possible that s/he will not be hungry if s/he has had lots of drinks before mealtimes
3. Try to eat meals together as a family so that your child has the opportunity to watch others eating and copy your behaviour as a parent
4. Make mealtimes fun by using brightly coloured plates and cups and having a variety of foods of different colours and textures available
5. Try to eat in a relaxed area, without the television on. Children are easily distracted by the television and having it on will reduce the time you can spend having fun with your child
6. Mealtimes should ideally be no more than 30 minutes. Try not to let the meal drag on for too long
7. If your child refuses food, take it away. Don't replace food that isn't eaten with treats.
8. Some children will dislike certain food textures. For instance, if your child is consistently refusing meat, it may be that s/he finds it too dry. Try adding sauces or introducing minced meat as alternatives
9. Be creative in how you encourage your child to eat fruit and vegetables. For example, homemade soups and smoothies are great ways of increasing your child's fruit and vegetable intake
10. Do not use food as a reward or a punishment

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact your primary care team.