

TIPS FOR KEEPING FINICKY EATERS HEALTHY

1. Schedule meals and snacks. Don't allow children to 'graze' all day.
2. Offer three meals a day and two snacks, but don't force children to eat everything on their plates.
3. Serve a variety of foods, including vegetables and/or fruit at every meal.
4. Eliminate distractions at mealtime, including TV viewing and telephone conversations. Sit and talk with the children.
5. Be physically active with the children every day.
6. Serve milk with meals. Also, limit kids' intake of sugary drinks like juice and soda pop between meals.
7. Serve healthy snacks, instead of offering a candy bar, serve a half-sandwich; a cup of yogurt; fruit or vegetables and dip; flavored milk or a whole-wheat tortilla with a little melted cheese and salsa.
8. Get the children involved in grocery shopping and food preparation. Even little children can help wash fruits and vegetables.
9. Make sure that healthy food is easily accessible. Put it in a little basket at the child's level. Prepare a plate with cup-up vegetables on it. Plan grocery shopping so that there's enough time afterward to cut up fruits and vegetables and put them into containers so kids can grab them easily and stash them in their backpacks.
10. Include a new food in your child's lunchbox with a note inviting the child to try it. But be aware that kids generally like to eat what other children eat.
11. Volunteer to cook a new food for a parent-teacher association function or as part of an after-school program. Kids may be more willing to try new foods as a group and sometimes can be involved in making the dish.
12. Set a good example for your children by eating healthy foods.
13. Flavor foods interesting ways, cheese on vegetables, and yogurt with fruit.
14. Look for comparable substitutes if a child doesn't like a particular food, but don't give in to his or her every whim.
15. A child may outgrow distaste for a food, so reintroduce it periodically. Consider serving it in a more appealing way or disguising it in some way.
16. Don't eat or serve super-sized portions.
17. Make healthy food on the weekends and freeze it for use during the week, when your family may be more pressed for time.
18. Make sure that kids are eating breakfast and dinner at home as much as possible.
19. Don't ban every taboo food, such as sweets, from the home. If you're too strict, children may binge on these foods when they do get access to them. Teach children the value of moderation. It's OK to have a cookie-but not the whole bag.
20. If a child is such a picky eater that you think the child's healthy may be in jeopardy, seek the advice of a professional.
21. Don't resort to multivitamins unless you ask the child's doctor first, and perhaps consult a dietitian.