

PICKY EATER



WHAT IS IT?

Picky Eating, also known as Food Neophobia, is being reluctant to eat or avoiding new foods.

PICKY EATERS:

- Are very selective about what foods to eat
- Accept about 30 different foods
- Will want to eat certain foods for many days at a time
- If a child tires from their favorite food, they will usually accept it again after a break from eating eat

Facts:

- About 20% of children are picky eaters
- It may take 15-20 or more food introductions before the child begins to “like it”



Sources

1. Beauchamp GK, Mennella JA. Flavor perception in human infants: development and functional significance. *Digestion* (2011) 83(Suppl 1):1–6.10.1159/000323397
2. Fraker, Cheri, et al. Food chaining: The proven 6-step plan to stop picky eating, solve feeding problems, and expand your child's diet. Da Capo Press, 2009.
3. Glendinning JI. Is the bitter rejection response always adaptive? *Physiol Behav* (1994) 56(6):1217–27.10.1016/0031-9384(94)90369-7
4. Mascola AJ, Bryson SW, Agras WS. Picky eating during childhood: a longitudinal study to age 11 years. *Eat Behav* (2010) 11(4):253–7.10.1016/j.eatbeh.2010.05.006
5. O'Connor T. Picky Eating [New Resources for Nutrition Educators]. *J Nutr Educ Behav*. 2016;48:231.e3
6. Satter E. Addressing super-picky-finicky-eating. Ellyn Satter Institute. <http://ellynsatterinstitute.org/fmf/fmf9.php>. Published April 2014.
7. Satter E. How Children Learn to Like New Food. How Children Learn to Like New Food- Ellyn Satter Institute. <http://ellynsatterinstitute.org/htf/howchildrenlearntolikenewfood.php>. Published 2016.



PATCH

Supporting Hawaii's Child Care Needs

P: 808.839.1990 E: mou@patch-hi.org
560 N Nimitz Highway, Suite 218, Honolulu,
HI 96817 | HOURS: M - F 7:30am - 4:30pm

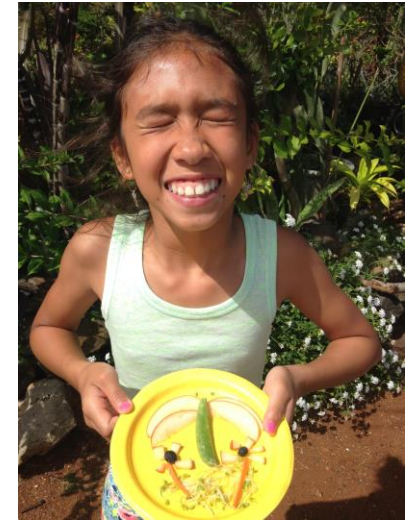


What causes it?

- In the womb, environmental factors play a role in taste and eating preference. Different flavors from aromatic compounds come from the diet of the mother and are transmitted into the amniotic fluid and breast milk. These different flavors influence taste preferences and food acceptance (Lam).
- Genetics make sweet food more palatable. Bitter foods are usually unpalatable due to a type of protective mechanism that prevents us from ingesting potential poisons. Toxic foods usually taste bitter (Glendinning).
- Having reflux or a milder underlying sensory issue as an infant can prevent children from eating certain foods (Fraker).
- Limited Exposure to different foods can cause children to develop food preferences (Fraker).

Tips

- Make food fun- Get the children involved with the meal preparation or make food art. Try using cookie cutter to make shapes with fruits, like melons, or sandwiches using whole grain breads. Try dip-able foods, like celery and peanut butter or toothpick-able foods, like cubed cheese and olives. Pinterest and Tastemade are great sources for food inspiration. By making the food appealing, the children are more likely to enjoy eating.
- Gradually introduce the food- Try making familiar foods with healthier alternatives or pairing unfamiliar foods with familiar side dishes. For example, making spaghetti using whole grain pasta or zucchini noodles and pairing it with a side dish of sliced bread. With repeated exposure, and it may take 15 or more tries, children can build a connection with their food and enjoy the process of eating.



Tips Continued...

- Lead by example- Children learn to eat new foods by watching us eat it too. Have children try new foods with you. Refrain from pressure; like saying phrases such as “Eat your food” or “You have to eat it all”. Being told what to do makes children less likely to do it.
- Don’t limit the menu- Provide a variety on the menu and do not only put food that the children readily accept. You can occasionally put favorite foods on the menu.
- Let them eat however they feel- Allow the children to eat with utensils or fingers, fast or slow, as much or as little, 1 or 2 foods being served, several helpings or none at all, and in any order. Don’t pressure the children to finish one thing before the other or make them “clean their plates.” By doing this, children will be able to maintain a quality feeding relationship.