

## Helping The Picky Eater

If your child picks and pokes at food, moves it all around the plate but eats very little and then is looking for food an hour later; if your child loves cookies, sweet drinks and candy, but eats poorly at regular meals, you can make mealtime better for your child!

### Tips for eating better at meal times

- Clear the house of junk foods. Get rid of soda, candy, potato chips, snack mixes, etc.
- Stick to a routine. Offer meals and healthy snacks at regular times.
- Keep menus simple. Too many choices can be confusing for your child.
- Introduce new foods one at a time. Always offer new foods with foods that you know your child likes.
- Set a good example by eating a healthy and varied diet yourself. Children are great imitators; do not expect your child to eat foods that they do not see you eating.
- Serve child-size portions. Large portions are hard for your child eat. This can be frustrating for you and your child.
- Eat with your child. Children enjoy company. Mealtime can be a great time to talk with your child.
- Have a party! Sometimes, make a special occasion out of a meal. Have your child help plan the special meal, for example: have an indoor picnic in the winter or have a holiday meal in the middle of summer.
- Involve your child with meals. According to age and ability, have your child help prepare meals. Here are some ideas: place a slice of meat on a sandwich, peel a banana, mix or stir ingredients, place cups or plates on the table.
- Think of snacks as mini-meals. Offer only foods that are nutritious such as fruit, cheese, hard-boiled eggs, peanut butter or crackers, yogurt, unsweetened cereal or custard. For children age 3 years and older, dried fruit, nuts and raw vegetables are also good choices.
- Limit drinks before or during a meal. Drinking too much before or during a meal, can make your child's stomach will feel full causing them to eat less.
- Offer more water and less juice. One small glass of juice a day is enough for a toddler.
- Do not use desserts as a reward. Stick to nutritious desserts such as those made with fruit, eggs or milk. Serve reasonable portions according to the age and size of your child.
- Keep cool! Do not show your concern to your child. Keep relaxed and calm during all meal times. Praise your child for what your child does right. Ignore what your child does not eat. Be careful not to make eating a punishment and do not force your child to eat.
- You are responsible for providing nutritious food at regular times. Your child is responsible for deciding how much to eat

**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse, or dietitian if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

**This teaching sheet is meant to provide you with additional information about your child's care. Diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up should be provided by your health care professional.**