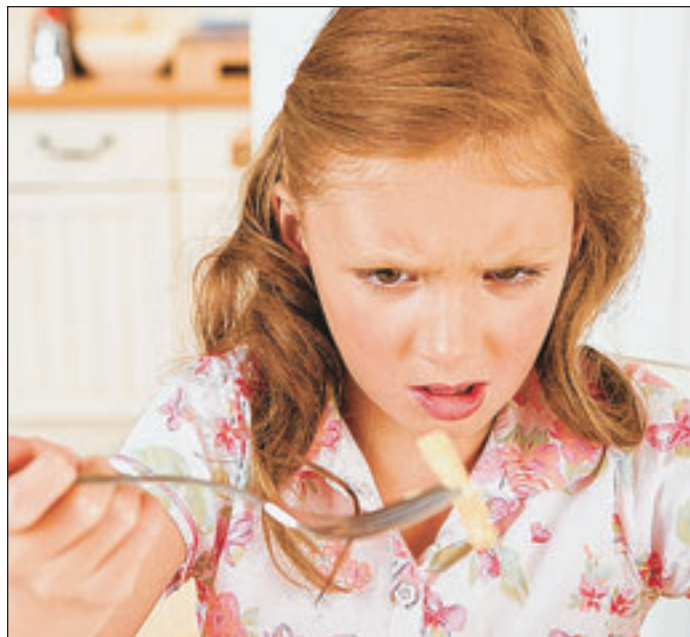


Wanting to be in charge is the most common reason that a child becomes a picky eater. Knowing a few simple things about children and food can help decrease food battles.

- Keep your child's development in mind. A toddler or preschooler wants to be in control. Not only of himself, but sometimes in control of you.
- Avoid power struggles by offering choices that both of you can live with. Don't ask, "What do you want to eat?" when you really mean "From the options I want you to choose, what do you want to eat?"
- Expect your child to go on food jags (eating the same food day after day). It's part of the control thing.
- Set rules-then don't negotiate. If your rule is "if you don't eat it, that's okay but you don't get anything else until snack time," don't jump to make another meal when your daughter proclaims that she doesn't like dinner.
- Appetite usually grows with age.
- Set a good example.
- Keep trying. Food that is familiar is more likely to be eaten. It can't be familiar if it doesn't keep showing up on the table.
- Don't make food a reward, especially for eating other foods.
- Consider taste. Cut down on spices. Kids have strong taste buds and may not like a food that is too spicy. Add familiar, liked flavors to new foods - like ketchup on vegetables.
- Make meal times non-threatening. Talk about things other than food.
- Encourage children to exercise and stay active. Lethargic kids may not feel hungry.
- Keep portion sizes small.



HELP FOR YOU AND YOUR PICKY EATER

- Substitute fruits for vegetables and vice versa.
- Don't let foods touch — that can be a turn off to some children. The plainer, the better.
- If your child fills up on drinks, serve beverages last.
- Make food temperatures warm or just room temperature.
- Offer new foods first when your child is most hungry. Or offer new foods at a non-meal time when there is less pressure to perform.