



## **tips to help with fussy eating and develop healthy eating habits.**

We all have a fairytale idea of family mealtimes with our children, chatting and laughing with everyone happily tucking into their food. Where, instead of enjoying a meal with your family, all the focus is on your child who won't eat. And NOTHING is going to persuade them to try their vegetables. Or their meat. Or anything at all really ... unless it's the pudding, of course.

Here are our top ten tips to reducing the mealtime stress and get your child eating health good nutritious foods.

1. First, clear your cupboards and fridge and get rid of sugary snacks, processed foods, fizzy drinks and replace with healthy alternatives. If your child asks for it you have a perfect answer: there isn't any! Instead of spaghetti hoops cook a pot of wholewheat pasta and make your own tomato sauce. Instead of fizzy drinks give them pure orange juice with sparkling water. Instead of fruit yoghurt laden with sugar give them freshly cut fruit with plain yoghurt and a little maple syrup.
2. Give a good example. Children learn by example. If you are excited about eating vegetables children will follow. So you need to eat well if you want your children to eat well. It might mean learning new ways to prepare vegetables.
3. Eating meals together as a family increases intake of fruit and vegetables. So make time in the evening to eat a meal together at the table rather than in front of the TV. Avoid using mobile phones, answering texts or emails during a meal. It's your time together as a family!
4. If a child is used to processed food start by making similar food at home ( eg fish fingers or burgers). Slowly add small amount of vegetables into the mixture. Increase the amount to them slowly so they won't recognise it. With time they will get used to the taste.
5. Avoid bribing, rewarding or punishment. Take the emotions out of mealtimes. Eating should be a matter of satisfying appetite, not something you do for mummy

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or daddy. One day they may have huge appetite because they might be having a growth spurt - feed them more. Another day they may not be hungry. Don't force them to eat. They may be unwell or tired. They won't starve themselves. Don't bribe or reward children with sweet foods, don't punish them for not eating or force them to eat.

6. Involve children in cooking, choosing and preparing food. They can sprinkle seeds on the salad, pick fruit in the supermarket or lay the table. Older children can even prepare a salad. Children are more willing to eat the food they themselves have chosen.
7. Snacks are important for keeping blood sugar even and energy stores topped up. But having too many will prevent your child from eating proper meals. If they are really hungry between the meals they will eat an apple or carrot sticks. So keep plenty of these in the fridge. Also avoid giving lots of milk between meals because it's quite filling and could spoil their appetite. Suggest water or diluted fruit juice.
8. Use familiar flavours to introduce new food. Just put one new food on their plate at the time along with other food you know that they like. Don't give up easily. Provide repeated exposure, sometimes even 15 times, for a new food to be accepted.
9. Avoid pressure and stress at mealtimes. Find the balance between not giving up easily and not pushing them too hard. The "one bite rule" is a happy medium.
10. Consider zinc deficiency or infections of gastrointestinal tract. Zinc is responsible for our sense of taste and smell. Without adequate zinc the food will taste bad or bland. Research shows that 70% of population is deficient in zinc. Microbes of the gastrointestinal tract can produce toxins which alter mood, cause cravings for certain foods and change taste receptors.

**Cure those fussy eating habits today! Call Jolanta on 01482969929 or 07960984838 to book your free 30 minute face to face consultation or email [jolanta@healingwithnutrition.co.uk](mailto:jolanta@healingwithnutrition.co.uk)**