

HELP SHEET 1 - MANAGING MEAL TIMES

Meal times can be stressful especially if your child only likes one particular food or refuses to eat. Did you know it may take up to 15 tries, or even more, for your child to get used to new foods, flavour and textures!

There is probably not a parent out there who hasn't given their child a new food to try, only for it to be confined to the bin!



This can be a source of stress and meal times can begin to feel like a battleground! So here are some useful tips you can try:

Tip 1: Be patient and don't give up. Just because your child has refused broccoli once, twice or even ten times, keep offering a small piece on their plate. If they don't eat it, don't force the issue, just take the plate away.

Tip 2: Try as much as possible to have a variety of fruits and vegetables on your child's plate at every meal. Don't be too concerned about mixing fruit with the main meal. Your child will begin to choose what they want to eat. If they don't eat what you have presented on the plate, don't force the issue, just take the plate away.

Tip 3: Children will follow your lead so whenever you can, try and sit down together to eat. Don't make different meals for your child, give them what you have, but remember not to add any salt to their food.

Tip 4: Perhaps you and your child can choose one new food to try each week? You can ask your child to help you find this new food in the shops. They can help you get it home and prepare it and then give it marks out of 10? Why not look for some different recipe ideas?

If you need any further support please contact familysupport@toftwoodfedertion.co.uk - we are here to help

Tip 5: Snacks are fine but keep it to 2 snacks a day. Make it a healthy snack option. If they turn their nose up, that's fine, but there should be no other sugary sweet alternative on offer! We do not underestimate how hard this might be, but stay firm, children very quickly respond to a consistent message. You could consider the following:

- carrot sticks, cucumber stick or slices of pepper with hummus as a snack
- give apple slices with smooth peanut butter as a snack
- mix chopped or mashed vegetables with rice, mashed potatoes, meat sauces or dhal
- add vegetables to classic savoury dishes such as cottage or shepherd's pie, spaghetti Bolognese or casseroles
- chop prunes or dried apricots into cereal or plain, unsweetened yoghurt, or add them to a stew
- for a tasty dessert, try mixing fruit (fresh, canned or stewed) with plain, unsweetened yoghurt.



Tip 6: Try not to comment on every mouthful your child is eating as this makes it too much of a big deal, which for a parent who is desperate for their child to eat....it is!!

These are just a few suggestions. More information is available at:

<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/online-learning>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/weaning-and-feeding/fussy-eaters/>

<https://www.henry.org.uk/tips/familymealtimes>

<https://www.childfeedingguide.co.uk/parents/>

