

Fussy Eating Top Tips for 12 years and over

It is very common for children to develop fussy eating behaviours, these top tips can help you to get through this often very difficult phase!

Do not provide restaurant service!

- ✓ Cooking alternative meals can encourage their fussy eating
- ✓ Be persistent – remember that some children require more than 20 exposures to a food before they will try them
- ✓ Be aware that there are some foods your child may never enjoy, but don't let this put you off cooking them.
 - Put a variety of new and familiar foods on the plate and allow them to choose for themselves what they are willing to eat



Try not to get too emotionally involved

- ✓ Try not to express worry, as this could cause your teenager to become anxious at mealtimes too
- ✓ You are not on your own! Fussy eating is very common, consider social media and support groups to discuss tips with other parents.
- ✓ Teenagers often like to assert their independence, so this can be a natural part of growing up – try not to let it upset you.

Keep meals to 20-30 minutes

- ✓ After this time it is unlikely any more will be eaten
- ✓ Remove meal without comment, and await next snack or meal



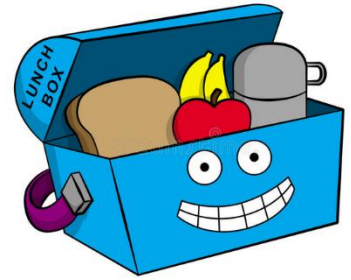
Talk about it!



- ✓ Your teenager is at an age where they can understand why eating a wide variety of foods is important for their body – try to engage them in informal discussion about this
- ✓ Consider using TV to prompt discussions about food – such as 'Junior Bake Off'
- ✓ Don't worry if your child does not want to discuss food, try not to become frustrated

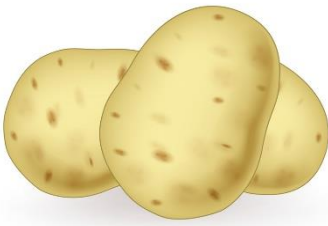
Encourage them to get organised

- ✓ Now your teenager is becoming more independent encourage them to continue eating 3 meals per day
- ✓ Take your child shopping and discuss food with them, encourage them to suggest and choose foods.
- ✓ Ask them to help you prepare a packed lunch or meal
- ✓ Encourage them to get up in time to eat breakfast



Changing the form food comes in may make it more acceptable

- ✓ Build on foods they already like!



- ✓ Don't try to 'hide' new foods in familiar foods, offer them alongside and encourage your child to touch, taste and look at the food.
- ✓ If your child likes chips – try potato wedges, hash browns, potato cakes and mash.
- ✓ If your child likes bread – try pitta bread, muffins and crumpets.
- ✓ Your child may need over 20 exposures to new foods before they are ready to try it – be persistent and don't give up.

Eat together as a family

- ✓ Keep mealtimes calm and relaxed, discuss other topics other than food
- ✓ Lead by example – eat a variety of foods and discuss them at the table 'yum!'
- ✓ Minimise distractions at the table
- ✓ Invite friends over
- ✓ Discourage your teenager from eating in their room



Stay positive!

It can be very stressful when your child won't eat well, try to ignore negative behaviours at the table (refusing to eat / pushing plate away) and praise positive behaviours (eating / touching / licking / tasting new foods).

Lucy Blackstone
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