



Pennridge Pediatric Associates

Pointers and Pearls

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Pleasing Picky Eaters

Have a picky eater? Take heart. You aren't alone. In spite of being picky, most children, even the ones who are hard to please, are able to get the calories and nutrients needed for healthy growth. Children's tastes change, so if your child spits green peas right back at you, put them away for a few weeks or months and then try again. Many parents give up a little too easily when it comes to introducing new foods. It can take eight to 15 exposures before a child warms up to a new taste.

Picky Eater Parent Guide:

- Make sure the dinner table is a pleasant place to be. Don't fight or raise your voice at the table.
- Don't pile it on. A mound of food can look overwhelming to a child.
- Break it up. Serve one or two nutritious snacks between meals.
- Dress it up. Dips and sauces can make the vegetables go down.
- Never force food. Don't use the "clean plate" rule.
- Blend, whip, chop, and mix. Get creative. Making a pretty plate - pancakes with a raisin mouth and strawberry eyes - can make meals fun. Try new recipes. If your child hates apples, he or she may LOVE apple salad with a few other ingredients mixed in. Topping off foods with cheese can do wonders, too, and it is a good way to add calcium to a meal.

If a child sees you enjoying a food, he or she will be more apt to try it. It may not be love at first bite, but the trick is to at least get him or her to try a taste. The more foods your child tries, the more likely some of them will be winners. As children get

older, especially in the toddler stage, what they see you eat is the example. Make sure to eat and drink as you would like your child to eat and drink. If you sit down to a soda and fries every night, don't be surprised when your child refuses the healthy stuff and demands to have what you're having. If your child takes a bite and reacts with a grimace - do NOT force the food. In many cases, your child is making a declaration of independence by refusing a food. The more you push, the more your child is likely to push back.

Around 1 to 2 years of age a child's growth (and appetite) slows. Your child will actually need fewer calories at this point, so it is no surprise that the fork may do a little less lifting. When your child is old enough, involve him or her in the



decision making process. Shop together to pick out ingredients. Let your child help in the kitchen. If your child is a part of the process, the odds of success at the table go up.

When any of us, child and parent alike, gets the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables in a day, it is much harder to overeat on the bad stuff because we are just plain FULL. If you are going to give your child sweets for a snack, give him or her a piece of fruit before the Twinkie.

Parents need to be careful they don't create children who will not eat a nutritious meal because they know they will get a tastier snack when they get hungry between meals. The solution is not to force the child to eat but to either put the original meal in the refrigerator and reheat it when the child gets hungry or allow him to stay hungry until the next meal. No self-respecting child will starve himself to death, and this is a good opportunity to teach him that there are consequences for his choices. Remember that your child is responsible for how much he eats, you are responsible for what he eats. His diet does not need to be balanced each meal or even each day, but it should be at least each week.

For a complete home reference guide to child nutrition a good book is "Guide to Your Child's Nutrition". This comprehensive, easy-to-use book offers information and strategies needed to manage the dietary requirements of children from newborns through adolescents. It is published by the American Academy of Pediatrics and is available at www.aap.org. Click on Bookstore and Publications.

Sore Throats

The terms sore throat, strep throat, and tonsillitis are often used interchangeably, but they don't necessarily mean the same thing. Tonsillitis refers to tonsils that are inflamed. They are almost never inflamed by themselves. The correct term is usually tonsillopharyngitis, which means the tonsils and the surrounding throat tissues are inflamed. Neither term indicates the cause of the inflammation. In

children of all ages, viruses are the most common cause of sore throats. No specific treatment is required (or effective in reducing the duration of the illness) for viral sore throats; they get better by themselves, usually in 3 to 5 days. Often, children who have sore throats due to viruses will have a cold at the same time. They may develop fever too, but they generally aren't very sick. Strep throat is caused by a bacterium. Although it occurs in younger children, strep throat is unusual before the age of 3 years. Children with strep throats usually look and act sicker than children with a viral sore throat. Their throats are more painful, they often have higher fever, swollen tender glands in the neck, and pus on the tonsils. Strep usually does not cause the cough and runny or stuffy nose that often accompany viral sore throats. It's important to be able to distinguish a strep throat from a viral sore throat because strep throats should be treated with antibiotics. If your child is seen because of a sore throat and strep is a reasonable possibility, a throat culture will be done. If the culture is negative, the infection is due to a virus and antibiotics will not help and should not be used. If your child's strep test is positive, an antibiotic (penicillin is still the best) should be given as prescribed even if the symptoms go away sooner. If your child's strep throat is not treated with antibiotics or if she doesn't complete the treatment, the infection may worsen or spread to other parts of her body, causing more serious problems. If left untreated, a strep infection can also lead to rheumatic fever, a disease that affects the joints and the heart.

Baby Walkers

In spite of what most people believe, baby walkers do not help children walk sooner. In fact, they can delay normal muscle development. Baby walkers send 8000-9000 children younger than 15 months to the hospital each year. Children in baby walkers can:

- Roll down the stairs - which often causes broken bones and severe head injuries.

- Be poisoned or burned - a child can reach higher when in a walker. A medication or cup of hot coffee on the table, pot handles on the stove, a radiator, a fireplace or a space heater may now be in baby's reach.

- Drown - a child can fall into a pool, bathtub or toilet while in a walker.

A child in a walker can move more than 3 feet in one second! Therefore, walkers are not safe to use (at home or in day care) even with close adult supervision. Safe alternatives include "stationary walkers" (ones that have no wheels but have seats that rotate, tip and bounce), playpens (great safety zones for children as they learn to sit, crawl or walk), and high chairs (older children often enjoy sitting up in a high chair and playing with toys on the tray).

Burn Out

Some parents feel terrible strain and fatigue as they try to juggle their responsibilities at home and at work. If you are starting to feel burned out, here are some ideas to help you ease the pressure.

Throughout your workday, try to fit some relaxing moments into your routine. Close your office door for 10 minutes, shut your eyes and perform a relaxation exercise. During your coffee breaks, forgo coffee and doughnuts and take a short walk instead. Diversions like these can reduce stress, improve efficiency on the job, and make you feel more vitalized when you return home in the evening, thus creating a more amicable family life.

If you regularly come home tired, try to develop rituals that improve your frame of mind when you arrive home. This may mean spending some time by yourself in order to put a distance between you and the day's stresses. Coming home is an important moment that should be taken seriously. Your children are eager to be with you and to share their day's experiences.

Look for areas in which you can reduce stress. For instance, can you bring in dinner two or three nights a week? Can you hire a high school or college student to help for an hour or two in the evenings, perhaps doing the laundry or cleaning up the

kitchen? If you can save a couple of hours a night this way, you will have more time to spend with your children and/or to relax or sleep. Involve the entire family in the evening responsibilities that are such a drain on your time and energy. For example, the family can work together to clean up the kitchen after dinner; with everyone's help it will get done much quicker and free up some time for you in the evening. If the house needs cleaning, have everyone pitch in on Saturday morning; this will help build family cohesiveness while finishing the job faster, thus leaving more time for enjoyable family activities. On the weekends, schedule some relaxation time for yourself. Go for a walk or go to the gym. Do some recreational reading. While family time is important and certain chores need to be done, time to unwind and recharge your own batteries is essential too.

From the Secretaries

Due to increased non-reimbursed costs we regret that starting Jan. 1st we must now charge a \$10 fee for forms that are filled out at times other than the child's well check up. Thank you for your understanding. Please be prepared to pay your co-pay and any other charges your insurance does not cover at the time of your child's visit.

Research at PPA

Coming soon:

Meningococcal infections often cause severe illness than can be rapidly fatal. As part of an ongoing series of studies we will be evaluating an investigational meningococcal vaccine in children 9-18 months of age and 3-6 years of age.