

1.

**Comfort foods**

Familiarity feels safe during rapid development.

## WHY IS MY CHILD SO FUSSY?

Picky eating peaks around age three and often resolves by five. What's behind it?

2.

**Sensitive taste buds**

Textures, smells or flavours may overwhelm.

3.

**Independence streak**

Refusing food is boundary-testing 101.

4.

**Temperament troubles**

Children who are easily frustrated or inflexible may resist new foods.

5.

**Weaning woes**

Late introduction to textured foods or medical issues like gastrointestinal issues can play a role.

# Eat Play Love

## MAKE MEALTIME A JOY FOR YOUR TODDLER

Here are some simple strategies to help manage picky eating and encourage your child to enjoy nutritious foods.

## HOW DO I HANDLE PICKY EATING?

### Do

- ✓ Offer **small portions** of new foods with familiar ones. Repeat exposure – 10 or even 20 times!
- ✓ **Eat together** to model positive habits.
- ✓ Keep mealtimes **calm and enjoyable**.
- ✓ Talk about the **food's colour, shape or taste** instead of asking if they like it.
- ✓ Encourage **self-feeding**, even if it is messy.
- ✓ Stick to **regular meal and snack times**.
- ✓ **Praise** positive behaviours.
- ✓ Let your child help **shop for groceries, prep or play with food**.



### Don't

- ✗ **Force-feed, punish, bribe or threaten** your child – it creates negative associations with food.
- ✗ **Quit** after one rejection. Try again after a few days!
- ✗ Give **sugary drinks or snacks** near mealtime.



## WHEN SHOULD I GET HELP?

Look out for red flags like:

- Signs of pain or discomfort while eating.
- Falling off growth curves or poor weight gain.
- Eating fewer than 10 foods from each major food group.
- Persistent choking, gagging or vomiting during meals.
- Trouble transitioning to textured foods.



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The Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (O&G) is part of the National University Centre for Women and Children (NUWoC), a national university specialist centre that aims to empower women, children and their families to lead healthier lives.

