

Toddler

Fussy eating

Tips and hints to help
manage your fussy eater





A quick check list

Does your child:

- ✓ Have a limited variety of foods – for example, less than 10-15 different food items in the one day?
- ✓ Avoid a whole food group such as all meat, chicken, fish and eggs?
- ✓ Only eat dry white food?
- ✓ Prefer very soft or blended food and gags on, or spits out lumps?
- ✓ Replace meals with milk?
- ✓ Only eat pouch or 'squeezie' pack foods?
- ✓ Refuse to try something new?
- ✓ Refuse all vegetables, salad and or fruit?

If you answered yes to any of the checklist you will be relieved to know that you are not alone and this is becoming a very common occurrence in many households. The problem is you may have a little one who is developing or has developed a few fussy eating habits that may lead to inadequate nutrition or health complications such as constipation, iron deficiency or slow weight gain and development.

What Australian Parents are reporting?

- Many Australian parents are concerned about their children's eating habits.
- Parents worry that their child is not eating enough.
- A toddler who refuses to try a new food at least half of the time is a fussy eater.
- Around 1 in 2 toddlers refuse to eat a new food.
- Children may need to see a new food more than 10 times whereas half of parents give up serving the food after it has been rejected 2-3 times.

Managing your fussy eater is not a ***one size fits all***

All children are different when it comes to their choice of foods; some preferring savoury to sweet foods, others liking smooth over chewy foods and some just like the same thing over and over. There are also differences in food fussiness that can be put in slightly different categories. Due to these differences, each category can require a specific management technique to ensure your little one is getting adequate nutrition for their age.

Use this guide to help you manage your little 'fuss pot' to set up healthy relationships and habits that they will take well into their adult lives.

If you have any further concerns about your child's eating habits please speak with your healthcare professional.

The small 'picky' eater

Some of these habits may include:

- Eating small, sometimes inadequate volumes of food.
- Eating very slowly.
- Filling up quickly and pushing the plate away.
- Never finishing the plate – however small the portion may be.

Issue:

- Your little one may be gaining weight very slowly or there may be medical concern around their growth.
- Their nutrient intake may be inadequate due to their small intake of food.

Management:

- Make every bite count.
- Add healthy fats such as avocado, olive oil, hommus, nut butters and nut meals (e.g. almond meal) to their diet.
- Feed your little one more frequently as their stomachs are very small (about the size of their fist). Aim to offer food every 2-2.5 hours.
- Restrict liquids that they may fill up on around meal times including water and milk, instead offering these after their meal.
- Limit or avoid 'filler foods' that don't offer much in the way of nutrients such as plain or savoury crackers, sweet biscuits, crisps, sweetened drinks such as fruit juice drinks and cordials.



Strawberry Friand

60 g	olive oil margarine
½ cup	finely ground almonds (almond meal)
½ cup	icing sugar
¼ cup	plain flour
½ tsp	baking powder
2	large egg whites, whisked
½ cup	chopped fresh strawberries
	Extra icing sugar for sifting

Preheat the oven to 180°C (fan forced). Combine the ground almonds, icing sugar, flour and baking powder in a bowl. Stir in the egg whites. Add the melted olive oil margarine and stir to combine. Grease 1 x 12 small muffin or friand tins. Spoon the mixture evenly into each tin and arrange sliced strawberries over the top. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until golden and springs back to the touch.

Tips:

- Kids can help mix and spoon into moulds
- Easy to freeze
- Strawberries are an excellent source of vitamin C and fibre
- Kids can spoon out mixture and place cut strawberry on each friand

Cheesy scrolls or pizza

2 cups	self-raising flour
90 g	olive oil margarine
½ - ⅔ cup	prepared S-26 GOLD TODDLER or S-26 GOLD JUNIOR milk drink

Fillings

1 tbsp	Vegemite®
⅔ cup	grated cheese or
2 tbsps	tomato paste
250 g	ham
2	tomatoes chopped
½	capsicum sliced
⅔ cup	cheese

Place flour and margarine in bowl; rub in with fingers until feel like breadcrumbs. Slowly add milk until dough forms. Roll out onto floured surface making a rectangle. Cover with Vegemite and cheese (or alternative toppings). Roll dough to make a cylinder. Cut segments about 2 cm thick and arrange closely on tray lined with grease proof paper (makes 12-14 small or 8-10 large). Bake for 12-15 minutes in 190-220°C oven. Let cool.

*Using fan forced oven is usually 20°C less. Some oven cooking times may vary.

Tips:

- If you can cope with the mess, kids love getting their hands into the flour and margarine. If you would prefer, invite them to roll the dough once it has formed into a ball. They can spread the ingredients on the dough.

Banana berry smoothie

150 mls	prepared S-26 GOLD TODDLER or S-26 GOLD JUNIOR milk drink
2	large spoonful's of vanilla frozen yoghurt
1	banana, peeled and chopped
½ - 1 tbsp	honey
3 tbsp	mixed berries (fresh or frozen)

Makes 2 drinks (or one large to share!!!). Add all ingredients into jug. Use blender to blend well until smooth. Serve with straw.

Having a fear of trying new foods

NEOPHOBIC – Extreme or irrational fear or dislike of anything new or unfamiliar.

These little ones 'know what they like' and 'like what they know' and more commonly seen between the ages of 2-6 years.

Some of these habits may include:

- Wanting to eat exactly the same foods day in and day out
- Flatly refusing to try anything new or unfamiliar.
- Becoming anxious if asked to try or eat a new and unfamiliar food.

Issue:

- Your child may be growing and developing well, however food repetition can cause taste fatigue and boredom causing them to reduce the variety of food.
- Restricted foods may limit social interactions.
- Anxieties surrounding food can put stress on family dynamics.
- Neophobia has been associated with poorer dietary quality.

Management:

- Children may need to see foods more than 10-15 times before they are familiar with them.
- You may need to take them through a few steps to trying a new food.
- Put the food item on the plate → Touch → Kiss or lick the food → Hold in front teeth → Hold in back teeth → Chomp down.

Fruit kebabs with dipping sauce

- 1 banana
- 4 strawberries
- 1 handful grapes
- 2 kiwi fruit
- 4 wooden skewers
- vanilla yoghurt or custard or banana blancmange (pg 15)

Cut fruit into even sizes and thread onto the skewers. Cut the point off the stick. Place a grape on the tip. Serve with vanilla yoghurt, custard or banana blancmange as a dip. Makes 4 kebabs.

Tips:

- Kids can help thread fruit onto sticks and make their own combinations. Cover a square piece of Styrofoam with coloured paper. Arrange sticks in the foam.

Apple and sultana muffins

- 2 cups self-raising flour
- ½ cup lightly packed brown sugar
- 1 ½ tsps ground cinnamon
- 1 cup prepared **S-26 ALULA GOLD TODDLER** or **S-26 ALULA GOLD JUNIOR** milk drink
- 90 g butter/margarine
- 1 egg
- 2 granny smith apples, peeled and grated
- ½ cup sultanas

Sift flour and cinnamon. Add sugar and **S-26 Alula Gold Toddler** or **S-26 Alula Gold Junior milk**, margarine, beaten egg, sultanas and grated apple. Mix with spoon until combined (don't over mix). Spoon evenly into muffin trays (makes 24 mini or 12 large). Use patty pans in the large trays. The muffins travel better this way in lunchboxes. Bake in the oven at 190-220°C for 20 minutes until golden brown (tops will spring back on touching). Cool on wire rack. Makes 12 large or 24 mini muffins.

*Using fan forced oven is usually 20°C less. Some oven cooking times may vary.

Tips:

- Easy to freeze
- Kids can help mix, crack egg and spoon into muffin tins



Avoiding whole food groups

There are 5 food groups and your child needs to enjoy a variety of foods from each group to help support their healthy growth and development.

Issue:

- Avoiding a whole food group such as dairy (and alternatives) or vegetables and salads may not provide adequate nutrition.
- Missing out on vegetables, salad or fruit may mean inadequate fibre and vitamin C.
- Missing out on meat, fish, chicken and eggs may mean inadequate iron, zinc and protein.
- Missing out on all dairy and alternatives may mean inadequate calcium, vitamin D and protein.

Management:

- Keep a food record of what your little one eats over a few days as this will reveal if a food group is missing – helping you to pinpoint missing nutrients.
- If missing out on fibre – try adding some grated or blended vegetables to dishes, use legumes such as red lentils or cannellini beans into dishes. Choose wholemeal or fibre enriched bread, cereals and pasta.
- If avoiding meats – try including eggs, tofu and legumes with their meals to add protein and iron to their diet.





Recipes

Vegetable curry puffs

Pastry

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 2 cups | self-raising flour |
| 90 g | olive oil margarine |
| ½ - ⅔ cup | prepared S-26 ALULA GOLD TODDLER or S-26 ALULA GOLD JUNIOR milk drink |

Place flour and margarine in bowl; rub in with fingers until feel like breadcrumbs. Slowly add **S-26 Alula Gold Toddler milk** until dough forms. Roll out until about ½ cm thick. Cut into rounds approximately 10-12 cm in diameter. Set aside.

Fillings

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 1 | large sweet potato peeled and cut into cubes |
| 400 g can | cannellini beans |
| ½ cup | green peas |
| 1 tbsp | soy sauce |
| 1 tbsp | mild curry powder |
| | spray oil |

Place potato cubes, peas and cannellini in fry pan with spray oil. Stir fry for 3 minutes add soy sauce and curry powder and stir fry for further minute. Remove from heat and let cool. Place tablespoon amounts of mixture into centre of each pastry circle. Fold pastry in half to cover mixture. Seal by turning up edges. Brush with beaten egg. Place on tray lined with baking paper. Bake in the oven at 190-220°C for 15-20 minutes until browned. Serve with choice of sauce such as tomato or sweet chili.

*Using fan forced oven is usually 20°C less. Some oven cooking times may vary.

Tips:

- Easy to freeze
- Kids can help roll, cut and seal pastry

The dry, white food eater

These youngsters love the plain, often dry, white foods with no sauces.

Liked foods include crackers, plain pasta or rice, bread (usually white) and may also include plain sweet foods including sweet biscuits, plain or sweetened breakfast cereals, sweet yoghurts, custard and chips, crisps and chicken nuggets.

Issue:

- Unfortunately, whilst this diet is rich in carbohydrate, it can often be quite low in nutrients especially fibre, protein and minerals such as iron and vitamins including vitamin C.
- A deficiency in iron and vitamin C can compromise immune systems making it hard to fight infection and the lack of fibre may increase the risk of constipation.
- With its bland colour, it can be very bland in flavour. Often little ones who are sensitive to textures, smells and strong tastes end up moving to these foods and it can be very challenging to eat rich flavoured foods such as meat, vegetables, fruits and sauces.

Management:

- The aim is to try to introduce some sauces or spreads into your child's bland palate – stay white to start with!
- Using white colour foods such as bananas, cheese, chicken, white beans and toasties. You can also try adding fortified rice cereal to baked goods to increase iron or use toddler milk to recipes to add iron, zinc and magnesium.
- Start with peeled cucumbers, peeled pears and dry with a paper towel to remove excess moisture that may deter them from trying the food.





Recipes

Crunchy corn dippers

1 cup	plain flour
2	eggs
½ cup	prepared S-26 ALULA GOLD TODDLER or S-26 ALULA GOLD JUNIOR milk drink
½ cup	cream (or buttermilk to decrease the fat)
2 cups	corn kernels*
½ cup	shallots, chopped
½ cup	grated cheddar cheese
	oil, for cooking

*If you have leftover meat from the night before such as silverside, a roast or bacon you can substitute 1 cup of corn kernels for diced meat or cooked bacon.

Sift flour into bowl. Stir in combined eggs, milk and cream and beat till smooth. Stir in corn, shallots and cheese. Place 2 tablespoons of mixture (spread out slightly) in hot pan for each fritter. Fry until golden on both sides. Serve with guacamole, hommus or sauce of your choice, such as salsa or sweet chilli.

Tips:

- Easy to freeze

Golden cheesy chicken bites

300 g	chicken breast fillet
1	carrot, peeled
1	zucchini
1 ½ cups	tasty cheese
1 ½ tbsps	soy sauce
½ cup	corn kernels
1 tbsp	corn flour

In a food processor, process chicken until smooth, transfer to bowl. Process carrot, corn kernels and zucchini and transfer to bowl. Add cheese, soy sauce and corn flour. Mix all ingredients well. Roll tablespoonfuls into balls and place on tray lined with baking paper. Bake in the oven at 180°C for 30-40 minutes until golden.

*Using fan forced oven is usually 20°C less. Some oven cooking times may vary.

Tips:

- Easy to freeze

Failing to progress from puree and blended foods

Purees and blended foods are recommended when your baby first starts solid foods around 6 months of age. Unfortunately some little ones like this smooth texture so much they don't progress well onto chunks and finger foods. They often gag and spit food out that requires more chewing before they swallow.

Without texture the muscles used for chewing may not develop properly causing littlies to be stuck on blended or pureed foods.

Issue:

- Cooking foods to a consistency where the food can be pureed and blended can dilute the nutrients in each bite.
- Easy to swallow textures does not challenge the muscles in the mouth used for chewing more dense foods.
- Some children find it difficult to navigate hard to chew foods such as meats and vegetables and often refuse them.
- Little ones may not develop chewing techniques and muscles in the mouth and jaw at the proper rate which may impact on their speech development.

Management:

- Start by adding very small lumps to purees such as a few pieces of cooked rice/risoni/grated cheese.
- Add small pieces chopped banana or avocado to yoghurts and purees.
- Trial soft crackers with spreads such as hommus, avocado and smooth peanut butter as these crackers are easy to bite down on.
- Encourage biting on a face washer in the bath or the back of their toothbrush to build strength in their jaw helping them to bite down.

Pumpkin hummus

440 g can	chickpeas drained
100-200 g	pumpkin cooked—depending on how ‘pumpkiny’ you would like it
2 tbsps	lemon juice
2 tbsps	tahini
½ tsp	cumin
2 tbsps	olive oil
1 clove	crushed garlic

Place all ingredients in food processor and blend until the mix reaches the required consistency. This recipe makes 2 cups.

Note:

- Chickpeas are high in iron, zinc and they have B group vitamins B1, B2 and B3 (essential for growth, healthy skin and eyes and metabolism).
- Garlic contains vitamin B1 and vitamin C.

Tips:

- Children love to help operate the food processor. Once the lid is on it is very safe, although keep a close eye on them.

Falafel balls with yoghurt

400 g can	chick peas
¼	onions finely chopped
½ tsp	cumin powder
½ tsp	ground coriander
1 clove	garlic
1 tbsp	flour

Place all ingredients in food processor and blend till smooth. Roll tablespoon amounts into balls. Shallow fry in olive oil or canola oil. Drain on paper towel. Serve immediately.

Tips:

- Kids can help mix and roll into balls.



The Milk-o-Holic

Unfortunately some littlies love their milk so much that they leave very little room for any solid foods. Their milk drinks end up replacing whole meals. The long term outcome of this is they can miss chewing cues and miss being exposed to a great variety of foods including fruits, vegetables, grains and cereals, meats, chicken, legumes and fish.

Issue:

- Children will still gain weight and grow with milk however their nourishment can be compromised especially their intake of fibre rich foods and those foods containing iron.
- Their appetites are generally satisfied with milk which unfortunately leaves no room for other foods supplying important nutrients.
- Littlies who over consume milk can also develop a bland taste similar to the white food eater.

Management:

- The recommendation is offer drinks (including milk) in a cup from 1 year. Encourage your little one to drink their water from a starter cup from 6 months.
- Food should always be given before offering milk, by doing this you will probably find they will eat more and drink less.
- Offer other forms of dairy and alternatives to supply calcium such as cheese and yoghurt.



Recipes

Banana blancmange

- 2 cups prepared **S-26 ALULA GOLD TODDLER** or **S-26 ALULA GOLD JUNIOR** milk drink
- 1 large banana or $\frac{2}{3}$ cup mango
- 20 g gelatin
- 60 ml water

Blend toddler milk and fruit. Dissolve gelatin, add to blended milk and fruit and let set in fridge for 2 hours. When set cut into squares.

Zucchini slice

- 2 large zucchini (approx. 300 g) grated
- 1 medium carrot grated
- 1 onion finely chopped
- 1 cup grated cheese
- 1 cup self-raising flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup oil
- 5 eggs
- Salt and pepper to taste

Microwave or lightly fry onion and bacon for one minute. Combine zucchini, carrot, cheese and onion. Sift flour, add oil and lightly beaten eggs. Season with salt and pepper. Pour into well-greased pie or quiche dish. Bake in the oven at 180°C for 40 minutes. If top starts to brown cover with tinfoil to continue cooking.

*Using fan forced oven is usually 20°C less. Some oven cooking times may vary.

Note:

- Easy to freeze
- Kids can crack the eggs

Environmental influences – falling into bad feeding habits

Routine is everything to your little one and setting up healthy food habits is essential in starting out correctly.

Issue:

- Poor timing of meals.
- Eating in front of the television.
- No set routine or designated area to eat.
- Being allowed to graze whenever they like will not help to teach and set up healthy food habits.

Management:

- Set aside an area for your little ones meals time, a low table and chair is ideal; if you can sit with them and enjoy your time together.
- Turn off distractions such as TV and iPad and eat with your toddler.
- Stop them from eating and moving around as this can be a choking hazard.
- Try to stick to similar meal times each day to set up their appetite cycle.
- Remove highly processed and refined foods and replace with healthy core foods.
- Its ok to allow treats for special occasions.
- If you don't eat your greens, neither will they.
- Role modelling is essential for your little to see as they are great 'copy cats' and will often mimic habits they see others doing.



Shared family platter
Lunchbox picnic

S-26 Alula Gold Toddler Premium Milk Drink

One 220mL serve contains many essential nutrients to help support:



Growth & Development.

Vitamin (A, B1, B2, B6, B12, C, D, E) Niacin, Folate, Calcium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, iron, Zinc & Iodine for growth & development.



Immune System Function.

Vitamin (A, B6, B12, C, D) Folate, iron, Zinc for immune system function.



Cognitive Function.

With Iodine and Zinc to aid cognitive function, as well as iron to help support toddler's cognitive development.



Digestive Function.

With Calcium, which contributes to the function of digestive enzymes. Digestive enzymes facilitates digestion.



As part of a varied & healthy diet and prepared as directed.



Our special thanks to Kate Di Prima,
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