



## We Can!® Parent Tips: Picky Eaters



With a picky eater, mealtime can seem more like a battle than a relaxing way to spend time with your family. If waging war over vegetables has pushed you too far, don't give up by dialing for a pizza or cruising to the nearest drive-thru. With these tips, your picky eater can also be a *healthy* eater.

### Lead by Example

- As a parent, you are your child's most important role model—especially when it comes to making healthy choices. If you eat healthy and try new foods, your child will, too.

### Stock Up on Healthy Choices

- Buy plenty of fruits, veggies, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products.
- Keep healthy foods where they're easy for your kids to see.

### Limit Junk Food in Your Home

- Limit the number of foods high in fat and added sugar that you bring into your home.
- Your child won't choose junk food if it's not around.

### Don't Force It

- Forcing your child to eat certain foods will only cause stress for you and your child.
- Serve a few fruits and veggies at mealtimes. Let your kids find the foods they like.
- Encourage your kids to try everything you serve.
- Set a "one-bite rule"—Kids must try at least one bite of each food on their plate.

### Try New Foods

- Try different textures and flavors to help your kids find foods they like.
- Instead of sliced apple, try sliced avocado or sliced kiwi.
- Instead of carrot sticks, try snap peas, sliced bell peppers, or cucumbers.



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### Get Creative

- Add fruits and veggies to foods your kids already like.
- Mix blueberries and oats into pancakes.
- Add sliced fruit to your child's favorite cereal.
- Serve shredded veggies over rice or whole wheat pasta.
- Make smoothies with fresh or frozen strawberries, a banana, and low-fat yogurt.

### Make Healthy Food Fun to Eat

- Cut baked chicken, low-fat cheese, and veggies into bite-size pieces. Let kids “dip” these pieces into dunking sauces. Try hummus, low-fat ranch dressing, ketchup, and mustard.
- Cut sandwiches into fun shapes.
- Give your kids the ingredients to “build” their own healthy taco or pizza.

### Let Kids Help With Meals and Snacks

- Children are more likely to eat food that they help make.
- Have your kids prepare meals and snacks with you. Let them help—
  - Make the shopping list;
  - Pick out food at the grocery store; and
  - Slice, mix, bake, or cook the food.
- Your kids will have fun and learn about healthy eating.

**For more information, visit:**

<http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov>

or call 1-866-35-WECAN.

