

# Managing Fussy Feeders

## *A guide to stress free meal times*

This pack contains information to help you manage challenging mealtimes and encourage healthy eating behaviours for the whole family. This pack includes information on:

- The Division of responsibility between parents and their children
- Pages from the Start Them Right Guide– a parent’s guide to under 5’s
- Managing mealtimes
- The ‘Eat The Rainbow’ trying new foods game



You may find that some of these resources are toddler specific however, the principles can be applied to children of all ages.

For further help, you can contact:

1. **Your GP or Paediatrician** – They can support you as you make changes to your child’s feeding patterns and routines, and can monitor their growth and nutrition throughout the process.
2. **Community Family Health Centres**- Child and Family Health Nurses know a lot about normal feeding, introduction to solids and managing typical feeding issues. You can find your nearest centre by searching ‘NSW child and family health nursing services’ or by going to [health.nsw.gov.au/kidsfamilies/MCFhealth/Pages/health-services-map.aspx](http://health.nsw.gov.au/kidsfamilies/MCFhealth/Pages/health-services-map.aspx)
3. **Private dietitians**- You can find a dietitian near you by either a google search or going to [daa.asn.au](http://daa.asn.au). You can get rebates/subsidies either through an Enhanced Primary Care Plan provided by the GP, or through certain private health insurers.
4. **Karitane**: For children less than 5 years of age, you can either contact the care line on 1300 227 464, or book in to one of their workshops on managing fussy feeding in toddlers [karitane.com.au/parenting-workshops](http://karitane.com.au/parenting-workshops)

Adapted from the factsheet ‘Fussy Eating in Toddlers’ – The Children’s Hospital at Westmead, Sydney Children’s Hospital Randwick, and Kaleidoscope Children, Young People and Families



## Quick Tips

This pack has more information on how to manage meal times, however below is a list of 'quick tips' to help you on your way.

- Parents decide **what, when and where** a child eats, and it is up to the child **how much** they eat, and **whether** they eat at all.
- Try to minimise the number of choices you allow your child at a meal, if any. This means not cooking a special meal if they don't want what you have prepared – they will eat if they are hungry.
- Offer foods in small portions – a large plate of food is likely to be overwhelming, and may cause them to reject the whole meal. They can always ask for more if they need it.
- It is normal for children, and in particular toddlers, to have set likes and dislikes. New foods may be rejected up to 30 times before a child will accept them in to their diet – repeated offering is the key to success!
- Children have fluctuating appetites, so it is important to look at what they have eaten over the course of 1-2 weeks, rather than meal to meal.
- Most children eat 3 meals and up to 3 snacks per day, so if they do not eat well at one meal they have plenty more opportunities to eat throughout the day.
- Be aware that growth slows down when children reach 1 year old, so their appetite may reduce.
- Having a meal time structure and routine can help your child know when to next expect food.
- Try to eat together as a family, and focus on topics other than what is being eaten.
- Meals should only take up to 30 minutes – children have short attention spans and cannot focus for longer than this.
- Try to keep distractions out of meal times, such as television, tablets or toys.
- Involve your child in food preparation, and set a good example by eating a range of healthy foods yourself.
- Be patient – changing meal time behaviours takes time!

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