

Fussy Eating

Paediatric Community Speech and Language Therapy

What is Fussy Eating?

- Food refusal is a normal phase that most children pass through.
- Fear of new foods often happens around 2 years of age but for some children food refusal or limiting can persist for longer.
- Typically, children will refuse food if it is new to them and it will take tasting it a few times before they learn to like it. They may also refuse foods if they don't 'look right'.
- Children will refuse foods if they have eaten enough.
- Some children will eat less than children the same age as them and the quantity of food a child eats may vary from day-to-day.
- Children often move through a series of steps before trying a new food e.g. just having it on their plate, licking it or chewing it and then spitting it out.

How to help

- Expose your child to new foods in a calm, fun and manageable way.
- Eat in a relaxed environment with as few distractions as possible.
- Eat with your child as often as possible so they can see you eating the same meal.
- Offer food from a shared plate that the whole family can take from.
- Involve your child in food shopping, cooking and food preparation.
- Avoid offering a sweet course as a reward.
- Allow enough time for mealtime to avoid rushing meals.
- Avoid creating any pressure for your child to eat more.
- Provide opportunities for messy food play considering the 6 steps to eating.
- Get your child used to lots of different textures through messy play – see below link.

Remember to...

Try new foods little and often

Keep mealtimes fun

Praise your child when they take part or put effort in

Helpful links	<u>NHS Fussy Eating information</u> 	<u>Great Ormond Street Fussy Eating</u> 
	<u>Messy Play Ideas</u> 	<u>Food Independence Tips</u> 