

Fussy eaters

The average toddler's likes and dislikes can be hard to keep up with. It's quite normal to discover that their favourite food from yesterday has fallen out of favour today. But if your toddler is going through a fussy eating phase, mealtimes can become a real ordeal.

Around half of all toddlers develop fussy eating habits, and most toddlers have picky days. Although it's quite normal and you're not alone, dealing with a toddler who turns their nose up at anything and everything can make it hard to provide a varied, balanced diet. These tips may help you through the more trying times.

Tips to encourage fussy eaters

- Start by organising your toddler's meal times around them; feed them when they're hungry and soon you'll see a natural pattern developing, which you can use as the basis of their ongoing routine
- Don't rush your child. Let them eat at their own pace and don't insist they clear their plate. Meal times should be relaxed and enjoyable – any extra pressure can reduce their appetite and cause fussiness
- If your toddler has refused a food once, simply reintroduce it again in a few days time. Don't give up - some new foods need up to 15 tries before they're accepted
- Your toddler's eating environment should be calm to allow them to focus on their meal – which means no distractions such as the TV
- Begin with small, manageable portions so that you can praise them when they finish and only give more if they're still hungry
- An aversion to vegetables is one of the most common food fads in toddlers. Try not to worry too much – you can still ensure they get their daily dose of goodness by including lots of their favourite fruits until they overcome their fussy habits
- If your toddler's natural hunger pattern coincides with family mealtimes, eat together as a family as often as possible. Watching their loved ones enjoying their meal can show your toddler just how delicious food can be. Remember, this also works in reverse; if it's obvious you don't like a particular food, your toddler may develop the same dislike
- Give your toddler lots of praise when they finish their food. And talk positively about the food you're both eating - saying 'yum yum this apple is delicious!' or 'this spinach is great' will show your toddler just how enjoyable food can be

It might seem like your toddler's tastes are changing by the day but the most important thing is to try to be patient. With perseverance, your toddler will overcome their fussy phase and learn to enjoy a healthy, balanced and nutritious diet.

In the meantime, you can make sure your toddler still gets some of the most important nutrients by giving them Aptamil Growing Up milk. With prebiotics to support them on the inside, it will give them more iron than cows' milk as well as added vitamin D and C to help keep their levels topped up until they move past their fussy stage.

Many Toddlers go through a fussy stage so the experienced mums on our Careline have plenty of advice to share. Call them on **08457 623 628**, Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm or start a Live Chat on our instant online messaging service between 9am and 5pm.