

# Overcoming children's picky eating

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Picky eating is a very common complaint among the parents. Children who are picky eaters usually prefer a particular food or would like rather play than eat anything at all. This is frustrating experience for most parents. However, there are some simple strategies to help the picky eater to eat a balanced family diet.

After the first year of life, a toddler's appetite decreases quite a bit as the rate of growth slows down. Appetites and food preferences can fluctuate a lot in young children. So look at the whole picture of how your child eats over weeks rather than any given day or meal. The parents should be reassured that the lack of interest in food is probably temporary and that attempts to force-feed not only are futile but also are likely to result in more severe feeding problems.

Children's strong likes or dislikes of particular foods become apparent after approximately 1 yr of age, and if possible and practicable, they should be respected. But avoid cheeps, juice, cold drinks or fast foods. Infants should be allowed to feed



themselves as soon as they seem physically able to do so, usually long before 1 year of age. Approximately by 6 month of age, infants can hold a bottle, hand-held foods can be introduced by the age of 7-8 months. The infant may be allowed to use a spoon as soon as he or she can

hold it and direct it to the mouth, usually between 10 and 12 mo of age. Mothers often inhibit this important learning process because of its messiness, but it is an important aspect of the infant's overall development and should be encouraged. By the end of the second year

of life, infants should be largely responsible for feeding themselves. Introduce new foods one at a time and in small amounts, instead of an entire meal of unfamiliar foods. Minimise distractions at the table. If a sibling is running around nearby or a cartoon

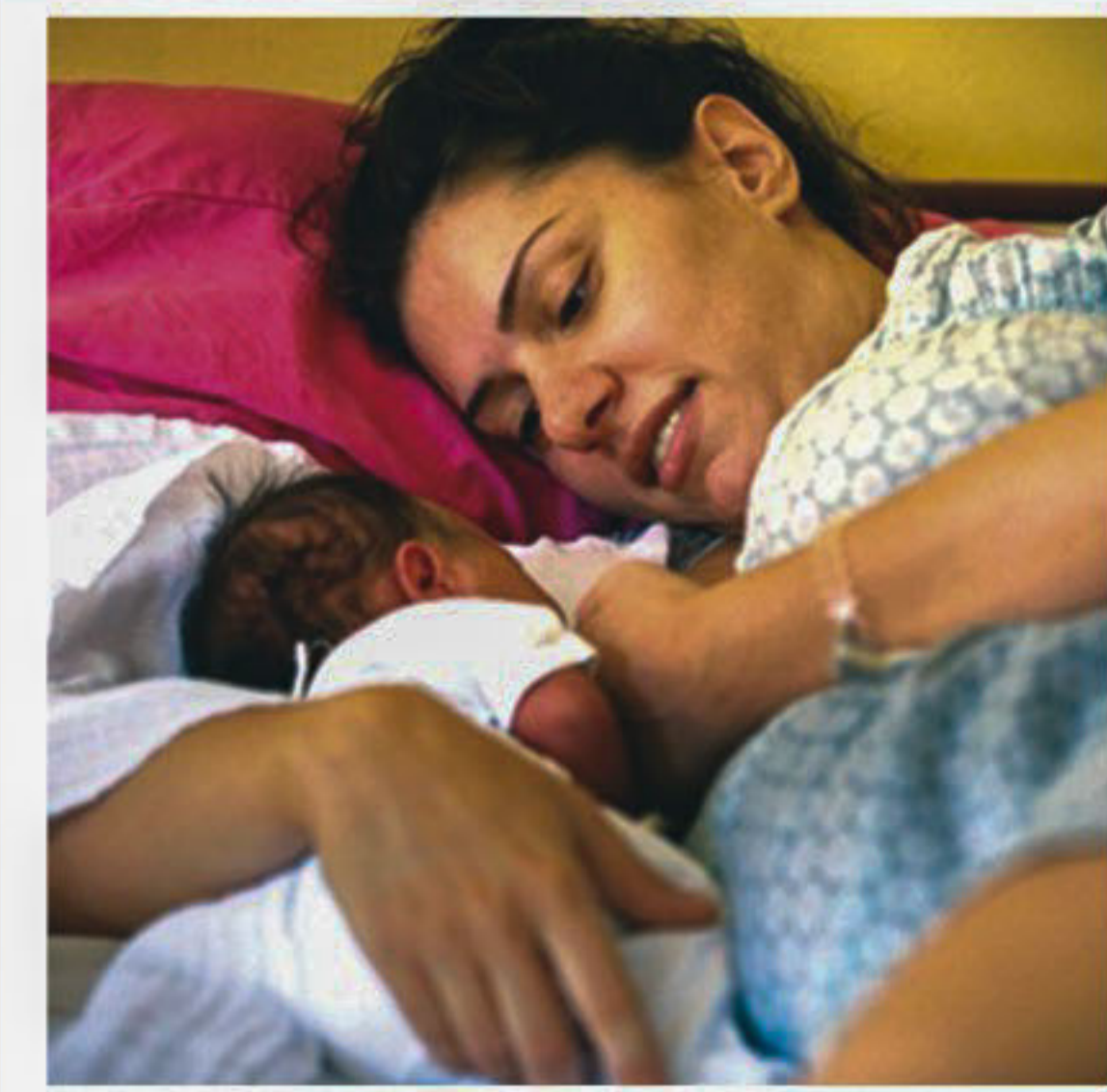
beckons from across the room, your toddler may lose interest in the food being served. Try to make meals relaxed and quiet. Make variation into foods. Cut foods into various shapes with cookie cutters. Do not give same food everyday. Serve a variety of brightly colored foods. At home, encourage your child to help you rinse veggies, stir batter or set the table.

If your child is not hungry, do not force a meal or snack. Likewise, do not induce or force your child to eat certain foods or clean his or her plate. This might only ignite or reinforce — a power struggle over food. In addition, your child might come to associate mealtime with anxiety and frustration. Serve small portions to avoid overwhelming your child and give him or her opportunity to independently ask for more.

If you are concerned that picky eating is compromising your child's growth and development, consult your child's doctor.

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## HEALTH TIPS



### Get the right nutrients while nursing

A nutrient-rich diet is essential for nursing mothers to promote a healthy supply of breast milk. The American Academy of Pediatrics says a nursing mother's diet should include:

- Plenty of calcium from dairy products, calcium-fortified foods, leafy green vegetables or dried beans.
- Vitamin D through safe exposure to sunlight and fortified foods.
- Protein by way of lean meats, fatty fish, eggs, dried beans, nuts and nut butters.
- Iron from leafy green vegetables, meat, fish and iron-fortified cereals.
- Folic acid from green vegetables, beans, citrus fruits, meat and fortified foods. Folic acid supplements also will do.

## HEALTH bulletin

# Cutting risk of diabetes during pregnancy

STAR HEALTH DESK

Gestational diabetes is a type of diabetes that develops during pregnancy — most often in the second or third trimester. Although gestational diabetes goes away after the mother has given birth, women who have had gestational diabetes have a 35-60% chance of developing diabetes in the following 10-20 years. The condition can also lead to risks for the baby, such as excess growth, birth defects and could be at a higher risk of becoming obese or intolerant to glucose when growing up. In such cases, an elective or emergency caesarean may be necessary to deliver the baby.

During pregnancy, placenta releases hormones that block how the insulin works and thus raise the blood sugar, the purpose being to provide energy for the baby. Therefore, even in a normal pregnancy the pancreas has to make a lot of extra insulin just to keep the situation controlled. When the pancreas is not making enough insulin to overcome the blockage from these hormones, the blood sugar will rise, and this is called gestational diabetes.

According to a new study published in BMJ, healthy lifestyle habits could prevent about half of this diabetes cases that develop during pregnancy.

Researchers found that the strongest risk factor for diabetes during pregnancy was being



overweight or obese during pregnancy. Women who were obese before pregnancy had more than a four times higher risk of gestational diabetes than those who had a normal weight before pregnancy.

Women who were at a normal weight at the start of pregnancy, and who did not smoke and were physically active had a 52 percent lower risk of developing gestational diabetes than other women, according to the researchers.

The strongest association was found for women who had all of the healthy lifestyle behaviors: a normal weight, healthy eating, exercise and no smoking. These women were 83 percent less likely to develop gestational diabetes than those with none of those habits, the researchers reported.

The researchers believe that almost half of all gestational diabetes could

be prevented if women were at a normal, healthy weight before pregnancy, did not smoke and participated in regular physical activity.

But, even women who were overweight or obese before pregnancy reduced their risk of gestational diabetes if they exercised, did not smoke and ate a healthy diet.

The researchers from the National Institutes of Health in Maryland acknowledged that it can be difficult to change lifestyle behaviours. However, they suggested that the time before and during pregnancy could represent an opportunity to change diet and lifestyle as these women might be particularly motivated to adhere to advice to improve pregnancy and/or birth outcomes.

### Did You Know?

## Healthy lifestyle behaviours may prevent 80% of heart attacks

Five recommended health behaviors may prevent four out of five heart attacks in men, a new study published recently in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology suggests.

Middle-aged and older men were much less likely to have heart attacks over an average of 11 years if they drank moderately, did not smoke and did everything right on the diet, exercise and weight fronts, the study found.

Also, each behaviour by itself reduced the risk for heart attack. For example, eating a diet rich in beneficial foods such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, reduced-fat dairy and whole grains was associated with a nearly 20 percent lower risk compared to those who practiced none of the healthy behaviors, the study found.

Researchers said the study suggests that people should aim to change their behavior in all five areas analysed in the study. They can eat better, lose weight, exercise (the healthiest men cycled or walked at least 40 minutes a day), stop smoking and drink only moderately, which was defined as about one drink a day.



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## Jealous, moody women may face higher Alzheimer's risk

Middle-aged women with a neurotic personality style and prolonged stress may have a heightened risk of developing Alzheimer's disease, according to a new research published in the journal Neurology.

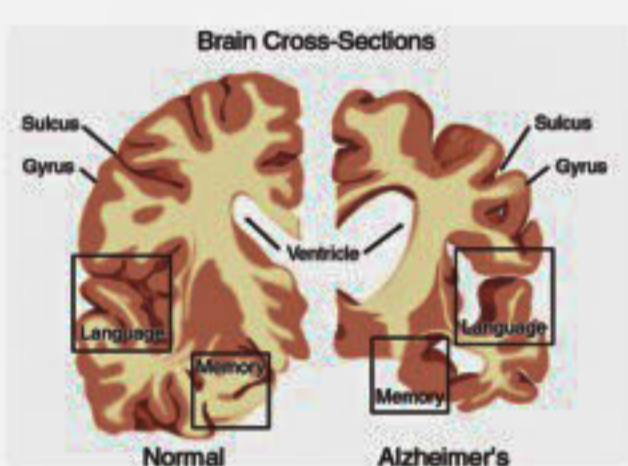
The scientists found that those who were most anxious, jealous and moody — which they defined as neurotic — and experienced long-standing stress had double the risk of developing Alzheimer's compared to women scoring lowest in these traits.

Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia that causes profound memory loss and impairments in language, focus, judgment and visual perception, according to the Alzheimer's Association. Millions of people in the world have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's, which is progressive, incurable and ultimately fatal.

## Living near a highway may be bad for your blood pressure

Living close to a major highway may raise your risk for high blood pressure, a new study published in Journal of the American Heart Association suggests.

People those who lived within 109 yards of a busy road had a 22 percent greater risk of developing high blood pressure than women living at least half a mile away, researchers report.



## Knowing for better living

If you have diabetes you have a **two to three fold** greater risk of **heart failure** compared to people without diabetes.

Control your diabetes

Maintain a healthy diet

Control your body weight

Avoid smoking

Exercise regularly

Consult your Doctor



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