

# TUCKER TALK TIPS **4** kids

## FUSSY EATING



### MY MESSAGE TO YOU

Many toddlers go through a phase of not wanting to try new foods. This is very common and it can take children time and many attempts to learn to like new foods. It's important to enjoy a variety of healthy foods as a family. These tips may help you to encourage your child to try new foods.



### BEFORE EATING

- Have a routine of 3 small meals and 2-3 snacks a day
- Prepare the food together
- Avoid giving snacks and drinks close to meal times
- Let children know that meal time is near
- Give limited food choices (e.g. 'Would you like some apple or banana?')



### DURING EATING

- Always try to eat together
- Be a role model: show that you like the food
- Avoid distractions (e.g. toys or TV)
- Offer new foods in small amounts with a food your child already enjoys
- Encourage your child to touch and smell new foods
- Keep calm and don't use food treats as bribes
- **Remember:** a child may have to see a food on the plate up to 15 times before accepting it



### AFTER EATING

- Praise your child for trying new foods
- Take uneaten food away without fuss after 20-30 minutes
- Keep the meal in the fridge in case your child is hungry later
- Don't offer alternatives to uneaten food
- Give non-food rewards for good behaviour at meal time
- **Remember:** children will eat when they are hungry

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### MANAGING FOOD REFUSAL

It can be very stressful for families when children repeatedly refuse to eat and throw tantrums at meal times. Children may refuse to eat when they:

- Have too much food on their plate
- Have filled up on drinks or 'sometimes' foods before meal times
- Want to feed themselves
- Are too tired
- Don't feel well



**Remember:** If a child is growing normally then they are getting enough food. Don't force a child to eat, trust their appetite.

### TIPS

- Make meal times fun and happy
- Make healthy foods fun (e.g. cut sandwiches into fun shapes or arrange fruit into smiley faces)
- Give small children plenty of time to eat
- Reward good behaviour at meal times (e.g. with sticker charts)
- **Remember:** you decide what food to give and your child decides how much they want to eat

If your child is refusing to eat at meal time, say something like,

Try it, it's yummy

If your child still doesn't want to eat, calmly say,

OK, we'll try it another time when you're hungry

and remove the food from the table.

### IF YOUR CHILD HAS A TANTRUM

HELPFUL	UNHELPFUL
Stay calm and relaxed - use a calm voice	Shouting or getting angry
Ignore the behaviour until your child stops	Arguing or discussing the problem with your child while they're upset
Distract your child	Giving in and giving your child what they want
Always respond the same way	Being inconsistent; this confuses children and your child's tantrums will likely continue

## Stress-Free Meal Times – Too Deadly!

