



**NUTRITION-RELATED
RESOURCES**

A RESOURCE GUIDE

Nutrition-Related Resources

What are selective eating habits within the pediatric population?

- Selective eating habits, also known as picky eating, are characterized by a child's refusal to eat certain foods or an insistence on eating only a narrow range of preferred foods. These habits can result in a limited diet that may not meet all nutritional requirements.

What are potential causes of selective eating habits?

- **Sensory Sensitivities:** Some children have heightened sensitivity to the taste, texture, smell, or appearance of certain foods.
- **Developmental Stages:** It is common for toddlers to go through phases of picky eating as they assert independence.
- **Medical Issues:** Gastrointestinal issues, food allergies, or oral-motor problems can affect a child's willingness to eat a variety of foods.
- **Behavioural Factors:** Mealtime dynamics, such as pressure to eat, distractions, or negative associations with food, can contribute to selective eating.
- **Psychological Factors:** Anxiety, past traumatic experiences with food, or conditions such as autism spectrum disorder can influence eating behaviours.

What are some signs and symptoms that can present with selective eating habits?

- Consistently refusing to eat specific foods or entire food groups
- Limited variety in the child's diet, often preferring carbohydrates or familiar foods
- Avoidance of new or unfamiliar foods
- Distress or tantrums at mealtimes
- Slow eating or taking very small bites
- Nutritional deficiencies, such as iron-deficiency anemia
- Weight loss or failure to gain weight appropriately

How can selective eating be determined?

- **Medical History:** Gathering detailed information about the child's growth patterns, medical history, and any underlying health issues.
- **Dietary History:** Documenting the child's typical food intake, preferences, and mealtime behaviours.
- **Behavioural Assessment:** Observing the child's eating habits and behaviours during meals.
- **Growth and Nutritional Assessments:** Monitoring the child's growth parameters (height, weight, BMI) and conducting nutritional assessments to identify any deficiencies.

What questions in history can be explored?

- How long has the selective eating been occurring?
- What foods does the child avoid or prefer?
- Are there any associated symptoms, such as gastrointestinal discomfort or allergic reactions?
- How does the child behave at mealtimes?
- What strategies have been tried to encourage eating?
- Are there any family history of eating disorders or gastrointestinal issues?
- What is the child's growth pattern over time?

What investigations should be done?

- Nutritional Assessment:** Blood tests to check for deficiencies in iron, vitamins, and other essential nutrients.
- Growth Monitoring:** Regular tracking of the child's growth parameters.
- Gastrointestinal Evaluation:** If gastrointestinal symptoms are present, further evaluation by a specialist may be warranted.
- Allergy Testing:** To rule out food allergies or intolerances.

What therapies or treatments can support the patient and/or family?

- Behavioral Therapy:** Techniques such as positive reinforcement, desensitization, and exposure therapy to gradually introduce new foods.
- Nutritional Counseling:** Working with a dietitian to develop a balanced meal plan and address any nutritional deficiencies.
- Family Education:** Educating parents and caregivers on strategies to support healthy eating habits without creating mealtime pressure or stress.
- Feeding Therapy:** For children with oral-motor or sensory issues, working with a speech-language pathologist or occupational therapist can be beneficial.
- Psychological Support:** Providing support for underlying anxiety, food aversions, or other psychological factors contributing to selective eating.

Resources

BC Children's Hospital - Reliable Nutrition Information on the Internet

- Guidance on finding trustworthy and reliable nutrition information online.

Dietitians of Canada - How Can I Help My Child Gain Weight?

- Tips and strategies for helping underweight children gain weight in a healthy manner.

Fish, Donna - Take the Fight Out of Food: How to Prevent and Solve Your Child's Eating Problems

- A book providing strategies to prevent and address common eating problems in children.

Health Link BC - Baby's First Foods

- Provides guidelines on introducing solid foods to infants, including what foods to start with and how to do it safely.

Health Link BC - Breastfeeding

- Offers information on the benefits of breastfeeding, tips for successful breastfeeding, and how to handle common challenges.

Health Canada - Children and Healthy Eating

- Discusses the importance of healthy eating for children and provides guidelines and tips to encourage healthy eating habits.

Health Link BC - Fibre and Your Health

- Explains the importance of dietary fibre, its health benefits, and how to include more fibre in your diet.

Health Link BC - Food Sources of Calcium and Vitamin D

- Lists foods that are rich in calcium and vitamin D, essential nutrients for bone health.

Health Link BC - Healthy Eating For Children

- Provides guidelines and tips for promoting healthy eating habits in children, focusing on balanced nutrition.

Health Link BC - Healthy Eating: Helping Your Child Learn Healthy Eating Habits

- Offers strategies to help children develop healthy eating habits that can last a lifetime.

Health Link BC - Helping Your 1 to 3 Year Old Toddler Eat Well

- Provides practical advice on how to ensure toddlers aged 1-3 years receive balanced and nutritious meals.

Health Link BC - Iron in Foods

- Information on the importance of iron, symptoms of iron deficiency, and foods that are good sources of iron.

Health Link BC - Meal and Snack Ideas For Your 1-3 Year Old Toddler

- Provides a variety of meal and snack ideas suitable for toddlers aged 1-3 years.

Rowell, K, and McGlothlin, J. - Helping Your Child with Extreme Picky Eating: A Step-By-Step Guide For Overcoming Selective Eating, Food Aversion, and Feeding Disorders

- A book offering a structured approach to help children with extreme picky eating habits.

Health Practitioner Resources

Dietitians of Canada: Nutrition A-Z for Children

- A comprehensive resource covering various nutrition topics relevant to children, from A to Z.

Dietitians of Canada - Feeding Your Picky Toddler or Preschooler

- Provides advice and techniques to encourage picky toddlers or preschoolers to try and enjoy a variety of foods.

Dietitians of Canada - Feeding Your 6 – 12 year Old Picky Eater

- Offers strategies and tips for dealing with picky eating habits in children aged 6-12 years.