

Parenting The Picky Eater

(NAPSA)—Here's food for thought: Elizabeth Pantley, parenting expert and author of *Perfect Parenting: The Dictionary of 1,000 Parenting Tips*, says parents can deal with a fussy eater if they put aside the myths and apply a few creative tactics. For instance:

Myth #1: Finicky eating habits lead to poor health.

"It's not uncommon for children to be picky. As long as your child is healthy, energetic and of normal height and weight, relax your attitude about food. The more you worry and scold, the bigger the battle," Pantley says. "Look at your child's diet for the week instead of the day; you're likely to discover that he or she is getting more variety than you suspected."

Myth #2: Kids should eat three square meals.

Human beings function better on small portions throughout the day. Eating every two to three hours helps a child avoid blood sugar "crashes" from dips and rises in insulin levels.

Myth #3: Children should clean their plates.

A better approach is to provide small servings during meals and teach your child to recognize his or her body's cues.

Myth #4: Promising dessert is a good way to encourage a child to eat.

This promotes overeating. "A high-sugar, high-fat treat can lead to a lifelong pattern of unhealthy eating," Pantley says.

Myth #5: You can't take a picky



Pleasing picky eaters can seem simpler when parents offer a variety of wholesome foods from which kids can choose.

eater out to dinner.

Pantley recommends restaurants that offer a variety of food choices, and letting the kids select their own foods. "When I'm out with all four of my kids, I look for restaurants where they all can find something they like. KFC is one of our favorites, especially with the KFC Kids Laptop Pack since it offers up to 18 different meal combinations—there's something to satisfy even my pickiest eater...who prefers mashed potatoes over French fries."

Myth #6: Picky eaters won't try anything new.

"Most children will try a new food after it is offered six to eight times," Pantley explains. "Present something new in small quantities and continue to offer it even after it's been rejected."

Here's the good news: Nearly all children outgrow the picky-eating phase, one food at a time.