

# PICKY EATING

The Ministry of Health background paper on the Guidelines for Healthy Eating describes two types of picky eating demonstrated in children. Younger children, between three and five, exhibit food neophobia, in which they have a fear of trying new foods. Whereas children of all ages may control their intake by eating only preferred foods, which are often high in fat and sugar and low in micronutrient content.

Parents find picky eating a concern because:

- they worry their children will go hungry
- family meal times are stressful
- the children have a higher intake of food from the top of the food pyramid

With the recent promotion of healthy eating in the media and the encouragement for schools to become involved in teaching children lifeskills around nutrition parents may be feeling a little stressed if they have difficulty getting their children to eat the healthy options at home. Some ideas that may help with this problem are:

- Avoid making servings too large
- Offer new foods many times (as many as 10 times) before giving up
- Have a meal routine
- Include healthy snacks and avoid them too close to meal times
- Eat as a family and turn the television off
- Do not force feed children but save unfinished meals for later if they come back hungry
- Increase the variety of food
- Make food look appetising
- Do not reward eating disliked food with liked food
- Involve your children in the preparation of the meals

The Ministry of Health have developed Healthy Eating Guidelines for all age groups. The Eating for Healthy Children booklet is available from your local Public Health Unit or order it from [www.cph.co.nz](http://www.cph.co.nz).



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## Healthy Nibbles

Nutrition and Physical Activity Information for Children  
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For more information visit: [www.cph.co.nz](http://www.cph.co.nz)

## Canterbury

District Health Board  
Te Poari Hauora o Waitaha