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I JUST ATE WHAT? CLEVER STRATEGIES FOR HELPING KIDS TRY NEW FOODS

For many parents, nothing can be more challenging than to get their young picky eaters to eat something new and healthy. And nothing can be more satisfying than seeing your kids continue to devour a dish you've just served for the first time.

Getting Kids to Try Something New

The earlier you can get kids to try new foods, the better it would be for you and your children. As such, you should always find ways to give your kids new foods to eat, even if it may be difficult.

To have an easier time introducing new foods to your kids, here are some smart, sneaky, and effective techniques and tips:

- **Introduce new flavors in nutritious desserts or treats**

A dessert is the one thing that picky eaters can't say no to. You can get them to try various flavors from fruits and vegetables they haven't eaten by adding them as ingredients in after-dinner or lunch treats.

You can make some **frozen ice pops using fresh fruits and herbs** your kids haven't tasted yet. If your children don't like carrots, you can bake some tasty carrot muffins or a carrot cake. They are filling and can also be [healthy snacks for pregnancy](#), too.

- **Play with the food's texture**

Many **kids detest trying new foods because of their texture**. Broccoli and cauliflower, for instance, aren't exactly the favorite vegetables of kids because of their coarse texture.

If you [track your baby's development week by week](#) and ascertain (with your pediatrician) that now is the time to introduce solid foods, start by giving your little one simple vegetable and fruit purees. This way, your child will still taste the food without having to chew thick vegetables or cope with an unusual texture.

Purees also work great for older kids. They add flavor to baked or roasted meat, fish or chicken and you get them to eat cauliflower and other vegetables they normally wouldn't eat when boiled or cooked in other ways.

- **Add a new ingredient to a dish or snack they already love**

Is your child's favorite food spaghetti? Add small cubes of vegetables they haven't tried to the sauce such as zucchinis or bell peppers. If your kids love mac and cheese, put some diced broccoli florets, kale, or spinach in the dish.

However, tell your kids upfront about what ingredients you've added so that they know what to expect. Also, add something new each time you make their favorite dish. Your kids will eventually come to accept new flavors and maybe even be excited about what will turn up next in their favorite dish.

- **Serve foods in different forms or shapes**

For most kids, serving regular foods in a new shape can make all the difference. If they don't want to try eggplant

parmesan because its main ingredient is a vegetable, you can give them a serving of this in their favorite shape instead of just a rectangular portion to make the dish more appealing.

Your kids will also more likely eat new fresh fruits and vegetables if they are cut in fun shapes. You can **use cookie cutters to make star-shaped apple, pear, or turnip bites.**

- **Give your kids some control over the new foods they eat**

When serving new foods, **allow your kids to explore and play** with them. For instance, if you want to introduce different types of berries, let them choose which ones they want to put as toppings on their pancakes or what to add in their smoothie.

If you want them to try some new fresh fruits and veggies, present them with a selection of these including a variety of dips as well. By doing so, you allow your kids to experiment with different flavors, eat something new and healthy, and have some fun, too.

- **Introduce new foods during family mealtimes**

Lastly, meals are always more enjoyable when everyone sits down together at the table. **If everyone is eating the same meal, kids are more likely to try something new.** Family meals also provide a calm and happy atmosphere where you can discuss the tastes and textures of a new dish to your kids.

During family mealtimes, make sure there are choices for your kids as well. Tell your kids that whatever foods are on the table are the only choices available and they can choose to eat those or not eat anything. For instance, serve soup in a bowl, the vegetable salad in another, roast chicken on a platter, and mashed potatoes in another container. Let each child choose which dishes he or she wants to eat. With this simple technique, you hand over some control to your kids, stop short-order cooking, and expose them to new foods all at the same time.

Picky eaters are certainly difficult to deal with during meal times. But what is more worrisome is the fact that their poor diet and eating habits will have negative effects on their health. Don't be afraid to try different techniques to get your kids to try new foods since this will benefit them in the short and long run.