

More Than Picky Eating?

A red-flag checklist for mealtime struggles

Lots of kids go through picky phases. But when mealtimes are a daily battle, the food list keeps shrinking, or your child seems truly distressed by food, it may be more than picky eating. **Here's the truth:** it's not your fault, and it's not your child being stubborn. Check what applies.

See your pediatrician first if your child:

coughs, chokes, or gags often while eating or drinking · is losing weight or not growing as expected · vomits often or seems to have pain with eating · shows signs of dehydration or constipation · has trouble chewing or swallowing. These need a medical check before any behavioral feeding support.

Behavioral red flags

- ☐ Eats a very short list of foods, and the list is getting shorter.
- ☐ Drops foods they used to eat and doesn't add them back.
- ☐ Only eats certain brands, colors, textures, or temperatures.
- ☐ Gags, cries, or melts down when a new food is on the plate or nearby.
- ☐ Refuses whole food groups (all fruits, all vegetables, all proteins).
- ☐ Needs a screen, a specific plate, or a ritual to eat at all.
- ☐ Meals regularly take more than 30 minutes or end in a battle.
- ☐ You're making separate meals at most meals.

Pressure-free mealtime starters

- ☐ **Take the pressure off.** No bribes, "just one bite," or clean-plate rules. Pressure raises anxiety, and anxiety shuts appetite down.
- ☐ **Always include one safe food** your child reliably eats.
- ☐ **Exposure counts.** Seeing, smelling, and touching a new food is progress. Many exposures come before a first bite.
- ☐ **Eat together** and enjoy your own food. Kids learn by watching.
- ☐ **Keep a rhythm.** Regular meal and snack times, with limited grazing in between.

What your checks mean

If you checked several behavioral red flags, or mealtimes are affecting your child's health, mood, or your family's daily life, behavioral feeding support can help. It works alongside your child's medical, speech, and occupational therapy team, not in place of them.

Let's make mealtimes calmer

Our behavioral feeding therapy uses gentle, step-by-step, pressure-free strategies to expand what your child eats and lower stress for the whole family.

Behavioral feeding does not replace medical care. Please rule out medical and swallowing concerns with your child's doctor.

[Book a free consultation](#)

ACCEPT. UNDERSTAND. LOVE.