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Children Like Food

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CHILDREN

Like FOOD

By AMY E. WOLD, *Child Development Specialist*
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**It Is Normal For Children To Eat
Well and To Enjoy Eating**

It is helpful to know the foods children need for good nutrition and which of these foods they like best. Wise guidance in developing good eating habits is based upon this knowledge.

Agricultural Extension Service

South Dakota State College

U. S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating

630.732

Happy Children Usually

CHILDREN *Like* FOOD

All children eat more when they are gaining rapidly in height and weight.

Three periods of most rapid growth are:

1. **The first year.** (It is normal to have less appetite in the second year.)

2. From 5 to 7 years.

3. Adolescence

Girls—13 to 17 years.

Boys—14 to 18 years.

Parents often nag:

1. The small child for eating too little.

2. The adolescent for eating too much.

Develop Good Eating Habits:

Make mealtimes pleasant. Keep table talk happy. Eating is a social experience to which everyone should look forward with pleasure.

Serve meals at regular hours. Some children need four meals a day and these should be served at **regular** hours. **Nibbling between meals should be avoided.**

Serve a variety of foods.

Serve some food at each meal which is well liked. This makes it easier to eat less liked foods.

Serve very small portions to a small child, (even a mouthful is a portion.) Let him have second helpings. This gives him a feeling of success.

Encourage him to feed himself when he first shows an interest in doing so. This will usually be sometime near his first birthday. He will spill a good deal at first.

Let him serve himself as soon as he is able. A small pitcher makes it easy for him to pour his

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lly Enjoy Their Food

own milk. A small glass is easier for him to handle than a cup.

Allow him to eat the **amount** of food he wants. No one else can tell how hungry he is.

Praise Him When He Eats Well

Pay as little attention as possible when he does not eat if he is well.

No healthy child will starve himself! It will not harm him to miss a meal or two occasionally. Appetite varies. Everyone has days when he is very hungry and days when he doesn't feel much desire for food.

Problems May Be Caused By:

Over anxious mothers who are sure children are not eating enough.

Unwise fathers who express their own food dislikes in the presence of children.

Indulgent grandparents, aunts and uncles who interfere.

Too early training in table manners.

Attempts to force children to eat when they are:

1. not hungry due to illness or lack of outdoor play.
2. too tired to eat (too much play without rest before mealtime.)
3. unhappy (mealtime is not the time to discipline children.)
4. over-excited.

Children imitate those they love and admire. They imitate food dislikes, too.

Children Like:

Foods which look pretty. They like colorful foods such as carrots, tomatoes and peas.

What They Eat is Mo

Refusal to eat is one of the most effective means a child can use for controlling his parents. Children often refuse food in order to get attention.

Foods which are crisp and chewy such as, raw carrots, chunks of apple, crisp bacon and toast.

Simple foods, simply prepared. Combinations of foods may confuse them.

Fish liver oil. They don't know that it doesn't taste good until someone tells them so. It is a very important food, particularly for children under six years of age.

Children Do Not Like:

Highly seasoned foods such as, salad dressings, pickles and luncheon meats.

Lumpy foods such as, cottage cheese, lumpy puddings or gravies.

Scorched or sour foods. Children are more sensitive to burned or sour flavors than most adults are.

Stringy foods such as, asparagus, or celery and green beans unless they are carefully prepared.

Foods which feel slippery on the tongue such as, sweet potatoes, squash and souffles.

A Good Appetite Spoiled By:

Drinking cokes, pop, etc.

Eating ice cream between meals.

Chewing bubble gum.

Drinking **too much** milk.

Eating between meals.

Make Sure Your Child Is:

Well (the doctor must decide this)

Playing out of doors enough

Sleeping and resting enough

Eating **nothing** between meals

Not being served too large portions

More Important Than *How*

Allow Him To

Eat by himself at his own table

Be served first at the family table

Watch and sometimes help you prepare food

Choose something he likes as one of the dishes to be served

Have his own attractive dishes

Have a shallow-bowled spoon with a straight handle. Curved handles are not recommended even for babies.

Use a child's fork or salad fork rather than a dinner fork

Use a napkin rather than a bib

Help clear the table

Have 20 to 30 minutes for eating and then have his dishes removed **without comment?**

It Is Considered Unwise To

Deprive a child of his dessert. Dessert is part of a well-balanced meal.

Discipline a child at mealtime.

Talk about the food except to say it is **good**.

To add sugar to a child's food at table. Most children have been taught to eat too much sugar.

Table Manners

The best way to teach good manners is to use good manners yourself. Your child will imitate what he sees.

Most of us expect good table manners too early. Be satisfied if your child eats nicely by the time he is 10 years old.

He will learn to eat nicely if:

He sees good table manners at home.

He is shown how to handle his silver, to use napkin, etc.

He is not nagged about his table manners.

Too early training is not recommended. It may interfere with eating.

Remember: Children will eat about as well as adults with whom they eat.

Lunch At School

School children should have a lunch which supplies about one-third of the day's food.

A 10-year-old boy needs two sandwiches.

A 14-year-old boy may need four sandwiches.

Both need milk and fruit.

Nothing takes the place of a well-planned hot noon meal. Every child needs some warm food at noon.

Daily Food Plan

Don't worry about calories—follow this daily food plan for children past infancy. Adapt amounts and add foods according to age. Girls usually need less food than boys.

Milk—one quart

Egg—one

Meat, fish or protein—rich food, one to two servings.

Vegetables—at least two (one green leafy or yellow)

Fruits—at least two (one citrus or tomatoes)

Wholegrain bread—at least two servings.

Wholegrain or enriched cereal—at least one serving.

Butter or fortified margarine—two teaspoonfuls.

Fish-liver oil—age one to six. Older, see doctor.

Iodized salt.