

Holiday Tips for Picky Eaters

Holiday gatherings often include family, friends and lots of new or special foods. This can be a stressful time for kids who are picky eaters, have sensory issues around food, or have special diets. A holiday meal is not the time to push new foods or textures, but it can be a time to let your keiki experience how food brings us together for an enjoyable experience. Here are a few ideas to help your keiki enjoy holiday meals and gatherings.



Family Gatherings & Mealtime

Bring Their Favorite Side Dish

With so many new foods on the table, include one or two you know your child will like and eat.

Eat a Pre-Dinner & Bring Snacks

Let your child eat before you go to a holiday meal. This will take the pressure off eating new things. Have a few snacks they like on hand, if they get hungry later on.

Have Realistic Expectations

Holiday meals can be overwhelming with new foods, places and people. Let them eat what they can and enjoy the experience of family and food together.

Prepare for Holiday Meals

Plan Meals Together

Let your child help plan holiday meals so they can add one or two of their preferred foods into the meal.

Go Shopping Together

Talk about where the food comes from, and let them choose and place items in the basket to build excitement for the upcoming meal.

Prepare Meals Together

Let your child rinse the vegetables, help measure and stir ingredients together. Encourage your keiki to touch and smell new foods so they become familiar with them and are more likely to try something new.



Do's and Don'ts for a Happy Meal

- **Do** talk to your child about what is expected, like sitting at the table through the whole meal, even when they are done eating.
- **Do** remind your host or family members not to be offended if your child doesn't eat all their food.
- **Do** keep food options and portions small.
- **Don't** feel guilty about your child's eating habits. You are doing your best and so is your keiki.

Sources:
<https://www.expressable.com>
<https://huckleberrycare.com>
<https://www.asha.org>



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