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**GET IS AN ONLINE
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ABROAD**

GET Help

"My child won't eat their food."

TIPS FOR PICKY EATERS

Our society promotes healthy eating as the main "ingredient" to overall wellness. But what should parents do for neurodivergent children labeled picky eaters to make sure they have the nutrients they need to grow while also accommodating their preferences?

Feeding Facts

- Children with sensory processing disorders may experience overloads their sensory system which engages their flight or fight response.
- Some children have difficulties that may warrant seeing an OT or SLP
- When a child is struggling to eat, their instinct is to escape. With an individualized approach, table behaviors can change!

Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

- Pressuring your child to try food: The goal is not to force your child to take a bite, but rather for the food to be accepted. Build your way up! Start with preferred foods and gradually introduce similar foods (e.g. from french fries to tater tots, to mashed potatoes) This is called food chaining!
- Not following a schedule for meals and snacks: Create a structured schedule for when your child eats snacks. Be consistent!
- Be a short-order cook: Division of responsibility clearly defines your role as a parent. You decide when, what, and where meals occur. Your child decides if and how much to eat.
- Providing a full meal of non-preferred foods Add one preferred food as an anchor at meals.

References:

<https://www.meganboitano.com/blog/picky-eating-myths-misinformation>
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83055047070?pwd=c3VRMmk3dlpqaU50cWI5bVBuSTVndz09>

Considerations

- Trust your child to follow innate intuition about if and/or how much they want to eat. Listening to your body's wisdom is an important skill that you need in adulthood.
- Family dinner time at the table is preferred, but providing options for where to eat is a good modification for feeding differences
- If your child has a limited diet, keep your eyes out for signs of malnourishment which could impede development.
- Often children with limited diets have either too much sensory sensitivity or too little. Working with a dietitian and/or OT can help you in this situation.



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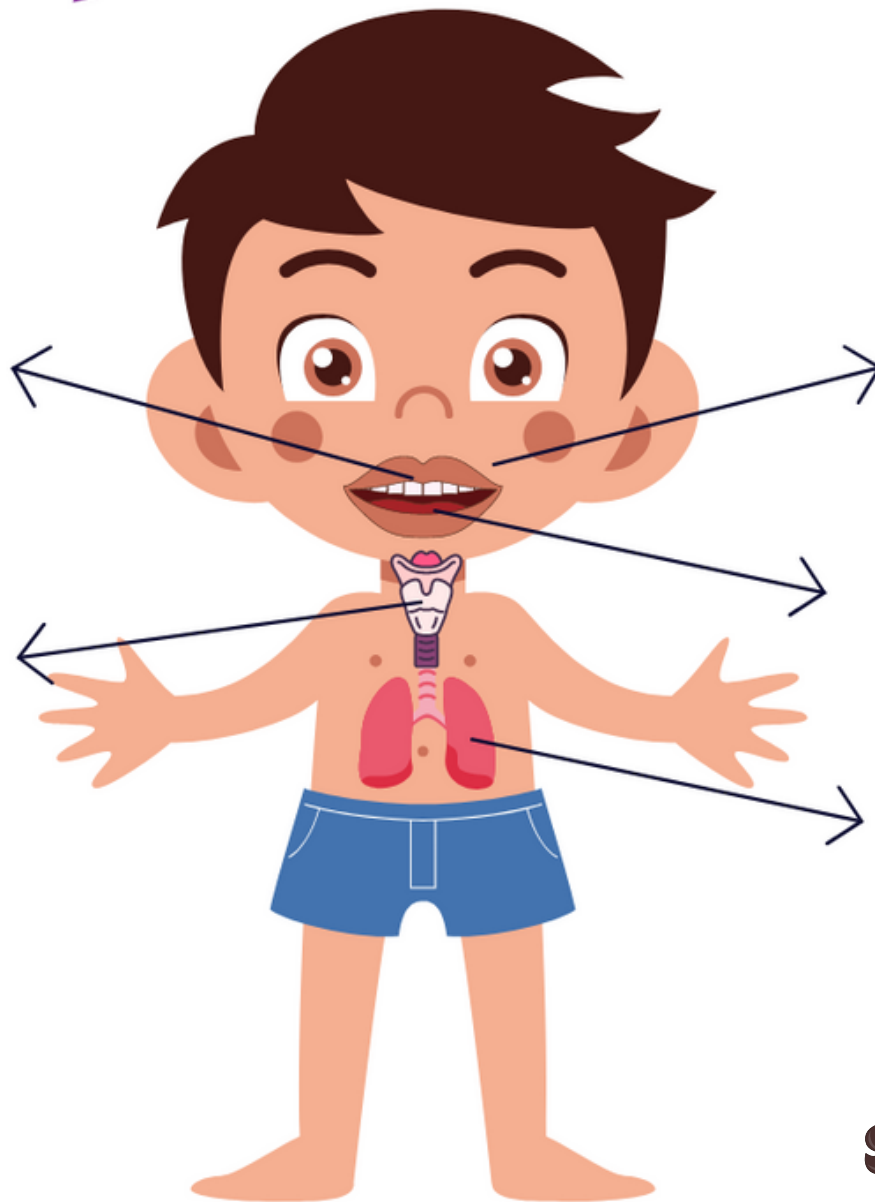


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