



Five top tips for feeding children at Christmas

from the Child Feeding Guide team

Here are our five tips for fussy festive eaters...

- 1. Relax the pressure:** The festive period is stressful enough. Don't focus on your child's rejection of their vegetables and don't pressure them to eat something that they don't want to. It won't encourage them to like it in the long term.
- 2. Embrace the chance to eat together as a chance to model healthy eating behaviour:** Children learn from others and will often try a new food if they see others eating and enjoying it. Is there a vegetable that you are struggling to get your child to taste? Serve it up at a family meal and gets others involved in showing your child that it tastes good.
- 3. Praise your child for eating** (any amount) of their meal and for trying new foods. We all like praise, and it motivates us all at any time of year.



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- 4. Watch portion sizes:** Christmas is often associated with excess so make sure that you don't give unrealistic portion sizes to children and then pressure them to eat it all. Continually doing so teaches children that they don't know when they are full and doesn't create happy mealtimes.
- 5. Avoid having lots of food on display if you aren't happy for your child to eat it.** Overt restriction of food makes it highly prized and such food is often eaten to excess when free access is given. Try keeping food out of sight until the kids are in bed, or pre-portioning foods into child-sized portions to make it easier to manage if the children ask for more.

Remember, it is Christmas, and some indulgence as part of a healthy lifestyle is absolutely ok.

Season's greetings from Emma, Gemma and Claire

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