

PICKY EATERS VERSUS PROBLEM FEEDERS

PICKY EATERS

- decreased range or variety of foods; will eat at least 30 different foods
- foods lost due to “burn out” because of a food jag are usually re-gained after a 2 week break
- able to tolerate new foods on plate; usually can touch or taste a new food (even if reluctantly)
- eats at least one food from most food texture or nutrition groups (e.g. purees, meltables, proteins, fruits)
- frequently eats a different set of foods at a meal than the rest of the family (typically eats with the family)
- will add new foods to repertoire in 20-25 steps on Steps to Eating Hierarchy
- sometimes reported by parent as a “picky eater” at well-child check-ups

PROBLEM FEEDERS

- restricted range or variety of foods, usually less than 20 different foods
- foods lost due to food jags are NOT re-acquired after taking a break, often resulting in a decreasing number of foods in a child’s repertoire
- cries and “falls apart” when presented with new foods; complete refusal
- refuses entire categories of food texture or nutrition groups (e.g. hard mechanical, meats, vegetables, soft cubes)
- almost always eats different foods at a meal than the rest of the family (often doesn’t eat with the family)
- adds new foods in more than 25 steps on the Steps to Eating Hierarchy
- persistently reported by parent as a “picky eater” across multiple well-child check-ups