

# MY CHILD IS A FUSSY EATER - WHAT CAN I DO?

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IS IT POSSIBLE THAT THE HUMAN BODY INSTINCTIVELY KNOWS WHAT IT WILL RESPOND POSITIVELY TO AND WHAT IT WILL RESPOND NEGATIVELY TO? IS IT POSSIBLE THAT WE OFTEN GIVE OUR POWER AWAY TO THE SCIENCE AND RESEARCH OF WHAT 'SUITS MOST' RATHER THAN RESPONDING TO WHAT TRULY WORKS FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL HUMAN BODY? IS IT POSSIBLE THAT AS CHILDREN OUR BODIES ARE VERY RESPONSIVE TO WHAT WORKS BEST FOR OUR OWN INDIVIDUAL BODY RATHER THAN WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS WE 'SHOULD' EAT?

When I was a child I used to love eating meals based on meat and vegetables and mostly baulked at pasta, rice, bread and dairy based dishes. I spent many nights sitting at the dinner table refusing to eat my meal or just picking at the sauce and not wanting the pasta. I was that 'fussy eater'. I know this caused considerable frustration for my parents ... and many tantrums from me! I was also a sickly child with many bronchial-based illnesses and major skin conditions that doctors and allergists could only explain with 'she's allergic to something but we don't know what'. These conditions continued until my early 30's.

Then I started using my body as my own science experiment. I studied how I responded to certain foods and realised that my body reacted poorly when I ate gluten and dairy based products and positively when I ate protein and certain vegetables.

When I look back, I now realise that my child's body actually knew what suited it and my refusal to eat was often my way of communicating to my parents that what was on offer for me to eat was not right for my body. With these foods now removed from my diet my bronchial infections and skin conditions have totally gone! Is it possible that if my parents had learnt to connect to me and observe how my body (including all my behaviours) responded

to certain foods I would have had a different experience of childhood illness? I wonder how many parents base their child's diet on what 'research' says and not on connecting to what truly works (and does not) for their child?

When considering your child to be a 'fussy' eater it will be important to observe all that goes on in a person's body when they do and do not eat certain foods. Foods are the basis of many reactions a body has, from:

- Physical reactions
- Symptoms
- Illness
- Behavioural issues
- Ability to focus or not focus
- Grumpiness
- Emotions
- Moods
- Raciness
- Dullness

The way in which we eat as adults is likely to be influenced by the way we were taught to eat as a child. If we observe our child to eat a certain food which results in them becoming hyperactive, lethargic, moody, bloated and so forth, is it possible that the child's body is saying, "this food does not support my body"? Fussy eating in this instance might not be 'fussy' but potentially a person's body communicating what food does and does not suit their body!

**In understanding 'fussy eating' it is also important to have another perspective by asking:** is my child controlling me through their fussy eating patterns?

It is not uncommon for our children to use 'controlling behaviour' to cause a reaction from their parents. But children do not become successful controllers unless we allow ourselves to be controlled. In designing our child's diet in order to eliminate controlling behaviour the only question to ask is "will this food support or harm my child's body?"



The child will soon learn that the only foods provided to them will be ones that support their body and will only react negatively when a food has been provided that does not work for them. This creates a known expectation in the child and their refusal to eat only certain foods of their choice will diminish along with this controlling pattern.

## TIPS TO HELP WITH EATING:

1. Provide food that supports your child's development to reach his or her potential.
2. Treats following a meal create a pattern and expectation. Consider carefully!
3. Children will not starve themselves. If they refuse to eat, simply offer a healthy meal at the next scheduled mealtime.
4. Snacking between meals can result in reduced hunger and consumption at mealtime.
5. Provide meals at a time that is supportive for the child. For example, consider providing your child their evening meal when they come home from school, when they are typically very hungry. By family dinner time children can often be overtired and full from afternoon snacks, making this time unpleasant for all concerned.
6. Learn to distinguish the difference between what your child 'wants' and what will truly support their body.
7. Get to know your child and learn to respond to their individual needs. Make decisions for your child based on this connection and not only what research suggests!

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**FABIC Director:** Tanya Curtis leads a team of psychologists who all employ the unique Fobic methodology based on supporting people to understand & change unwanted behaviour. For general enquiries email [info@fobic.com.au](mailto:info@fobic.com.au) or call 07 5530 5099.

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