

# Picky Eaters

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# Overview

- Definition
- Epidemiology
- Development
- Assessment
- Management



## Definition

- “An unwillingness to eat familiar foods or try new foods, severe enough to interfere with daily routines to an extent that is problematic to the parent, child, or parent-child relationship”

# Prevalence

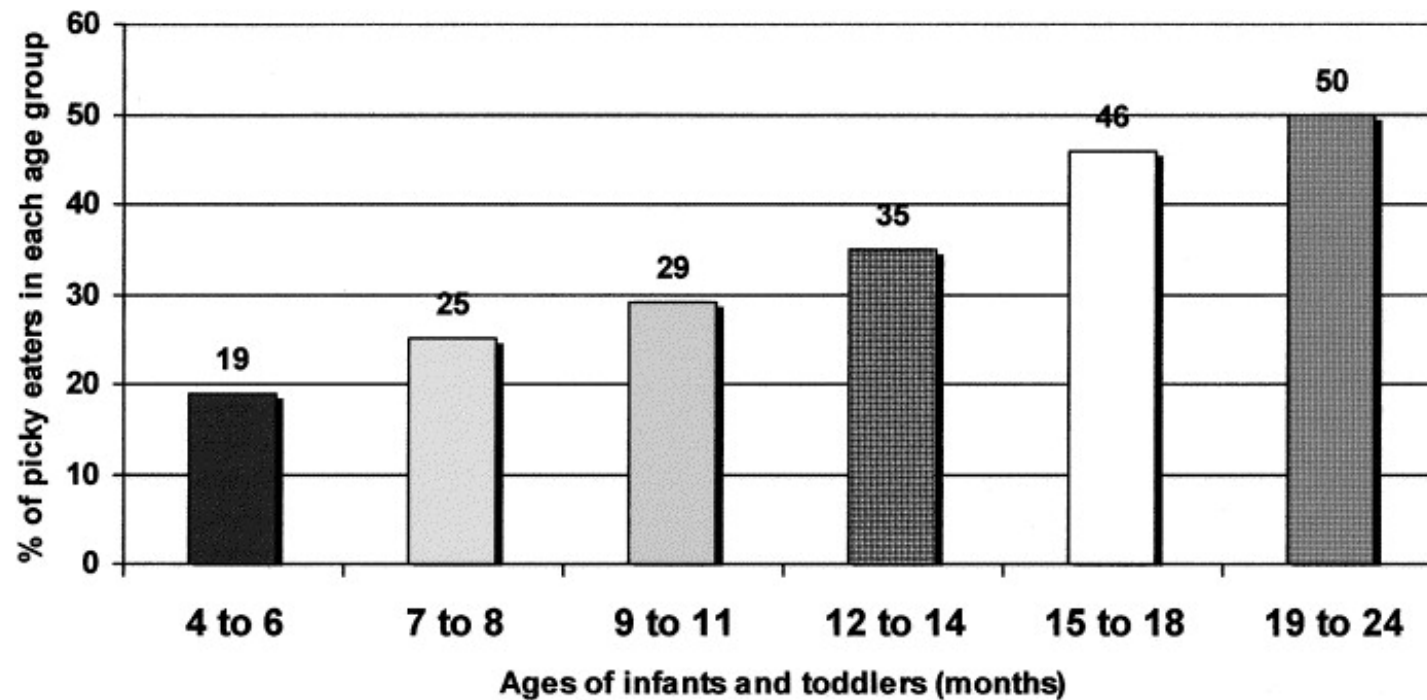


Figure 1 Percentage of caregivers who perceived their infant or toddler as a picky eater.

Betty Ruth Carruth , Paula J Ziegler , Anne Gordon , Susan I Barr

**Prevalence of picky eaters among infants and toddlers and their caregivers' decisions about offering a new food**

Journal of the American Dietetic Association, Volume 104, Supplement 1, 2004, 57 - 64

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jada.2003.10.024>

# Prevalence

- 50% by 24 mo
  - more likely to be older
  - less likely if higher weight for age
  - NO difference in household income, race/ethnicity, sex
- 36% of toddlers overall
- Tends to decline after 3 years of age

## What does a picky eater look like?

- Less likely to eat vegetables
- Negative temperamental traits, behaviorally inhibited, anxious
- No significant overall nutrient intake. Adequate RDA
- NOT associated with eating disorder
- +/- socioeconomic class
- No association with race, gender, or sex

# Feeding Goals of Development

- Toddlers and preschool children
  - transition to cup and utensil feeding
  - fluctuations in appetite
  - adequate iron and zinc intake
  - avoiding overconsumption of juice and sweetened beverages
  - developing routines for healthy eating and activity
- School-age children
  - adequate intake of fruits, vegetables, calcium, vitamin D, and fiber
  - avoidance of energy-rich/nutrient-poor snacks and overconsumption of sugar-sweetened foods and beverages
  - development of a healthy body image

# Development Timeline

- Liquid → solids (6mo) → adult food (24mo)
  - 12-15mo: Wean from bottle
  - 1 year: Thumb and first finger grasp
  - 3-4 years: Sit at table. Less choking risk. Use utensils
  - 4 years: Grinding motion, food sensory
  - School age – understand nutrition concepts, help make choices, assist in food planning/preparing



## Expected behaviors

- Appetite decreases at 1 year
- Small variety of foods at 2 year
- Play with food
- 3-4 years: environmental cues affect eating

# History Taking

- Diet History
- Pattern of refusal
- Mealtime atmosphere
- Parent expectations



# Physical



- Height/Weight
- Constipation history
- +/- anemia screen

# Food for Thought

- Lactose intolerance
- Oral hypersensitivity
- GERD
- Child-parent relationship
- Limited resources
- Autistic spectrum disorder
- Unrealistic expectations
- Difficult temperament

# Management

- Reassurance
- Reassurance
- Reassurance



# Management

- Provide healthy food choices
- Offer variety, 8-15 times, "try one bite"
- Combine foods that your child likes with ones previously refused
- Offer foods the child can eat by him/herself (finger foods)
- Have children help prepare the food
- Add eye appeal
- Family meals, calm pleasant atmosphere
- Positive reinforcement
- Provide information, "sweet" "soft" "crunchy"

# Resources

- [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org)
- AAP
- Augustyn
- Carruth, BR., Ziegler, PJ., Gordon, A., & Barr, S. (2004). Prevalence of picky eaters among infants and toddlers and their caregivers' decisions about offering a new food. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 104, 57-64.
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- Lumeng, J. (2005). Picky Eating. In M. Augustyn. B. Zuckerman, & E.B. Caronna (Ed.) *The Zuckerman Parker Handbooks of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics for Primary Care* (3rd ed., pp. 299-301). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.



**Thank you!**