DNA
DANONE NUTRICIA ACADEMY

PICKY EATING IN CHILDREN:
How to Tackle It?

Definition and Prevalence of Picky Eating

Definition[1]
- When children consume an **insufficient variety of foods** that are familiar or unfamiliar to them by rejecting a sizable portion of food, it is called "**picky eating**".

Prevalence[1]
- Studies have reported the prevalence of picky eating as **6% - 50%**.
- The peak prevalence occurs at about three years of age.

What Causes Picky Eating?

Predictors of picky eating can be **child-related** or **parent/ caregiver-related.[1]**

Predictors of picky eating

Child-related factors	Parent/caregiver-related factors
Low birth weight/ Gender (Male)	Maternal age/ BMI
Child emotionality/ Being choosy	Maternal social class/ education
PROP bitter-taste phenotype/ Feeding difficulties	Maternal background/ Parenting practices

Non-predictors of picky eating

Breastfeeding	Early introduction of solids

Consequences of Picky Eating

Diet[1]
- Less dietary diversity and variety
- Lower intake of micronutrients –Fe, Zn, carotene, retinol, vitamin D, and selenium

Growth and development[1]
- Higher prevalence of thinness
- Lower BMI
- Pervasive developmental problems
- Constipation

How to Tackle Picky Eating ?

- **Keystones of picky eating management:[2]**
  - Reassurance to parents
  - Emotional support
  - Follow-up
  - Advice to parents on strategies (Making food interesting and attractive)

- **ONS with prebiotics**
  - Improves the **nutritional status** of picky eaters[3]
  - Reduces **URTI incidence** in picky eaters[3]
  - Promotes **weight and height** in picky eaters[4,5]

- **A pediatric dietician or psychologist or speech and language therapists must be referred if:[2]**
  - ARFID, food allergy, DM, CF, or significant anxiety
  - Learning difficulties or oral-motor dysfunction

- **Picky eating often resolves with no or minimal intervention.[2]**

Key Takeaways

- Picky eating impacts young children's diet, growth, and body composition.
- ONS with prebiotics improves growth and nutritional status in picky eaters.
- Support and advice to parents by HCPs can help to ease picky eating.
- Picky eating can be predicted by child-related and parent caregiver-related factors.

References:
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2. Levene IR et al., Archives of Disease in Childhood - Education and Practice 2018;103:71–78.
3. Ghosh AK et al., J Int Med Res. 2018 Jun;46(6):2186–2201. Epub 2018 Apr 3.
4. Khanna D et al., Nutrients. 2021 Oct 14;13(10):3590.
5. Zhang Z et al., Nutrients. 2021 Aug 30;13(9):3036.