



Feeding the under 3s
the food they need

Why toddlers refuse food: additional factors

Guidance & Tips for Parents

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FOOD REFUSAL:
A NORMAL PHASE



FOOD REFUSAL:
ADDITIONAL FACTORS



Toddlers may also lose their appetite if they are:

- tired
- not feeling well
- shouted at
- pressured to eat more food when they have had enough
- frequently offered foods that they dislike or find disgusting
- pressured to eat food they dislike
- continually offered food and drinks throughout the day
- rushed at mealtimes
- feeling sad, lonely, anxious or insecure
- constipated
- anaemic

For most toddlers fussy eating is just a phase that they eventually pass through. However if the problem persists or you have some concerns, speak to your health visitor or GP. They will be able to check your child's growth and development.

Very occasionally fussy eating is linked to medical problems or a memory associated with discomfort on eating. Your GP may be able to assess this and can refer your toddler to a paediatrician, or a speech and language therapist for oral-motor dysfunction, if necessary.

There are some toddlers who are extremely fussy eaters but have nothing medically wrong with them. Such toddlers quite often get much worse at around 18 months. These toddlers may have had problems with lumpy foods when these were first introduced. These children usually dislike getting their hands and face dirty, and are often sensitive to sound, touch or smells. Sometimes children grow out of this and start to improve their eating at around five years of age. It is especially important that these toddlers are not forced to eat food that they dislike as this may cause them to vomit and may eventually affect their growth.

See **Why toddlers refuse food: a normal phase** for more guidance.