



Feeding the under 3s
the food they need

How to cope when your child shows extreme food refusal: things that help

Guidance & Tips for Parents

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EXTREME FOOD
REFUSAL: THINGS
TO AVOID



EXTREME FOOD
REFUSAL: THINGS
THAT HELP



Do	Reason
Encourage your child to experience different textures through 'messy' play every day. Your toddler may find some textures (like Playdoh) very difficult, so start with textures that they are happy to touch. This may need to be drier consistencies initially such as rice or lentils. Gradually progress to more messy/wet substances allowing them to gain confidence. Have plenty of fun and get messy. If you don't like touching certain textures yourself, or don't feel comfortable allowing your toddler to make a mess, then why not take them to a playgroup in your area.	Many children who are extreme food refusers are very sensitive to touch on the hands and mouth, and so will not even pick up new foods. Messy play helps them to get used to new textures.
Give small frequent meals of foods that your child accepts.	Some children become very anxious at mealtimes and are sometimes very slow eaters. Small frequent meals will help them to take in the calories that they need.
Remember, even children who are extremely fussy eaters usually grow and develop normally, if they are given the foods that they will accept.	It is important to keep your child growing well, and these extreme food refusers do grow as we would expect them to if they have enough of the food that they will eat.

See **How to cope when your child shows extreme food refusal: things to avoid** for more guidance.

If the problem persists see your GP or health visitor who may refer you to a specialist feeding team if one is available in your area or a clinical psychologist.