

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



News

Global Experts Offer Recommendations to Help Parents Manage “Picky Eaters”

Research Shows Picky Eating Can Lead to Significant Nutritional and Psychological Complications

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MONTREAL, Quebec, August 4, 2010 – More than half of children ages 1 to 6 are considered picky eaters by their mothers, according to new research sponsored by Abbott.¹ A growing body of evidence suggests that picky eating may not only cause short-term nutritional deficiencies, but also lead to lifelong implications.^{2,3,4,8}

To help parents around the world cope with picky eaters and encourage healthier eating habits, Abbott Nutrition has convened a multi-disciplinary group of pediatric health experts to raise awareness of the condition and offer healthy eating recommendations. These experts recently visited Edmonton, Alberta to share a new approach in the diagnosis and treatment of feeding difficulties in young children with local pediatricians, caregivers, mothers and fathers.

"We often see a communications disconnect between physicians and caregivers when they talk about feeding difficulties. Terms such as 'picky' or 'fussy' eating require explanation to fully encompass the range of feeding problems that can occur in young children. We need to identify the contributing cause and therefore the appropriate response", said Glenn Berall, M.D. chief of Paediatrics at North York General Hospital in Toronto, medical director of the Feeding Disorders Clinic at Bloorview Kids Rehab and Active Staff in the Division of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition at SickKids Hospital in Toronto.

Picky eaters tend to eat small amounts, to favor only a few certain foods, or to avoid trying new foods.² Experts attribute the condition to a wide range of causes, including physiological factors such as appetite, genetics and growth.³ Other causes may include psychological issues, such as a struggle for autonomy, changing emotions and moods, and the level of affection or adverse interaction between mother and child.^{3,4}

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Parents may not be aware that their own behaviour – such as bribing or threatening children to eat – can unintentionally exacerbate the problem.⁵

Although more research is needed, some studies show picky eating can have serious consequences, including growth complications, increases in chronic illness, and increased risk of developing eating disorders later in life.⁷ Picky eating also can result in nutritional deficiencies, and sometimes can lead to social and emotional problems, such as aversion to touch,⁴ lethargy and disinterest in playing or learning.⁸

To encourage healthy eating habits, nutrition experts recommend the following "Food Rules":

- Avoid distractions during meal time
- Adopt a neutral attitude – don't pressure the child to eat
- Encourage appetite by limiting snacking and balancing portion sizes
- Limit duration of meals
- Provide age-appropriate foods
- Introduce new foods to a child gradually and regularly
- Encourage children to eat independently — don't spoon-feed a child who is old enough to use utensils
- Allow children to "get messy" when they eat

"If parents are concerned that their children are not receiving adequate nutrition while trying to change their behaviour, they may want to consult with a pediatrician or try a complete, balanced nutrition supplement", Dr. Berall added.

Details about the new approach in the diagnosis and treatment of feeding difficulties in young children, video excerpts of the Edmonton educational conference and more information about picky eating can be accessed by visiting www.pickyeating.ca.

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About PediaSure Complete

PediaSure Complete is a nutritional drink supplement that is clinically proven to help children grow. With more than 20 years of clinical research supporting its benefits, PediaSure Complete offers children a complete, balanced source of nutrition needed for healthy growth and is the #1 pediatrician recommended brand in the United States. For more information, visit www.pediasure.ca.

About Abbott Nutrition

For more than 85 years, Abbott Nutrition has been developing and marketing science-based nutritional products to support the growth, health and wellness of people of all ages. Internationally recognized brands include the Similac[®] brand of infant formulas; the PediaSure[®] brand of complete and balanced nutrition for children; and the Ensure[®] brand of complete and balanced nutrition for adults.

The company is a leader in nutritional products clinically shown to address the distinct dietary needs of people with serious health conditions or special nutrient requirements, such as the Glucerna[®] brand of nutrition shakes and bars for people with diabetes.

About Abbott

Abbott is a global, broad-based health care company devoted to the discovery, development, manufacture and marketing of pharmaceuticals and medical products, including nutritionals, devices and diagnostics. The company employs approximately 83,000 people and markets its products in more than 130 countries. Serving the Canadian population since 1931, Abbott employs 2,000 individuals in Canada.

Abbott's news releases and other information are available on the company website www.abbott.ca and www.abbott.com.

¹ Abbott Pediatric Nutrition and Harris Interactive, Europe Quantitative Report, May 5, 2006.

² Carruth BR, Ziegler, P, Gordon, A, Barr S, Prevalence of Picky Eaters among Infants and Toddlers and Their Caregivers' Decisions about Offering a New Food. *J Am Diet Assoc.* 2004; 104: S57-S64.

³ Kerzner, Oral Feeding Resistance in Young Children. ANI's PediaSure Global Speakers Meeting, Wheeling, Illinois. November 2007. Slide 11.

⁴ Feldman R, Keren M, Gross-Rozval O & Tyano S. Mother-Child Touch Patterns in Infant Feeding Disorders: Relation to Maternal, Child, and Environmental Factors. *J. Am. Acad. Child Adolesc. Psychiatry* 2004;43(9) 1089-1097.

⁵ Chatoor, I. Feeding Disorders in infants and toddlers: diagnosis and treatment. *Child Adolesc Psychiatry Clin N AM* 2002;11:163-183.

⁶ Birch LL, Gunder L, Grimm-Thomas K. Infants' consumption of a new food enhances acceptance of similar foods. *Appetite* 1998; 30:283-95.

⁷ Manikam R, Perman, JA. Pediatric feeding disorders. *J Clin Gastroenterol.* 2000;30:34-46.

⁸ Golub MS, Keen CL, Gershwin ME, Henrickx AG. Developmental zinc deficiency and behavior. *J Nutr.* 1995; 125:2263S-2271S.