smart moms resist the food fights

Some kids demand the same food morning, noon, and night. The less you make of it, the better. Focus instead on offering a variety of healthy foods. The demands won't last forever.

(and, in the end, everybody wins)

NEW foods slip through lips easier when we are smiling and laughing

"I'm an adventurous eater. Give me calamari (squid) with garlic sauce and I'm in heaven—tentacles and all. I love tasting new foods. So when we eat out I never order anything I've tried before.

My two children on the other hand are picky eaters. It's a struggle just to get them to eat everyday food let alone to try new ones.

My son used to love fruit as a toddler but won't touch it now. I'm not sure what happened but once a child gets an attitude about a certain food, that's it. And the more I encourage him to taste it, the more stubborn he becomes.

Recently I've thought a lot about how my mother raised me. What did she do that made me love trying new foods? There are two things that stand out for me. The first is that she made dinnertime a time to savor life as well as food. I think she believed new foods slipped through lips easier when we were smiling and laughing.

The other thing my mom did was to never force us to eat anything. She always put a dab of each food on our plate but didn't make a federal case out of it if we didn't eat it. In fact, she never said a word about food. I guess she just trusted us to figure out for ourselves that food was good—and we did. She encouraged us to try new foods but always allowed us to be in control by saying we could spit it out if we didn't like it. And she reminded us that taste buds change and grow—much like feet – and that foods may taste different when we're older. Over the years it's been fun to try new foods to see if they 'fit' yet.

I've now scaled back on what I expect my children to eat. I'm taking my cues from my mother now and I think it just may be starting to work. My son ate a banana last week. This is the boy I thought had sworn off fruit forever. I think I'll celebrate with a plate of calamari in garlic sauce. Who knows? If I play my cards right maybe he'll join me someday."

Michele

TIPS:

- **Encourage—but don't force—children to try new foods.**
- **Give them a spoonful of every food, even if they say they don't like it.**
- **Let children feel in control. Tell them they can spit a food out if they don't like it.**
- **Don't give up! Taste buds change over time and what they hate today may be a favorite food tomorrow.**

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