



Feeding the under 3s  
the food they need

# Why toddlers refuse food: a normal phase

## Guidance & Tips for Parents

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FOOD REFUSAL:  
A NORMAL PHASE



FOOD REFUSAL:  
ADDITIONAL FACTORS

Food refusal is a normal phase that most toddlers pass through.

- Fear of new foods in the second year may be a survival mechanism to prevent increasingly mobile toddlers from poisoning themselves through eating anything and everything.
- For some time toddlers may limit the variety of foods they eat. This phase will normally pass without any problems but will be more evident in some toddlers than in others.
- Your toddler may refuse a food if it is new to him or her. They need to taste it a few times to learn to like it, so always offer it the next time you are eating it.
- Toddlers refuse extra food when they have eaten enough. Your toddler may eat less food than other toddlers of the same age. If your toddler is growing and developing normally then he or she is taking the right quantity of food for his or her own needs.
- Remember that the quantity of food toddlers eat may vary from day-to-day. Some parents get anxious about this and toddlers then tend to react to parental anxiety by reducing intake.

See **Why toddlers refuse food: additional factors** for more guidance.

