10 Ideas for Tasting New Foods

Variety is an important part of a healthy diet. Some children, however, are hesitant to take a first bite of a new food. Here are some ideas for providing encouragement:

1. Get your child involved
   Children are more excited about tasting new foods when they are involved. Let your child pick fruits or vegetables at the market, help prepare meals, and set the table.

2. Offer choices within limits
   Ask your family something like: “Would you prefer broccoli or asparagus for dinner?”

3. Serve your family the same foods
   Set a good example by eating these foods yourself! Demonstrate a positive experience when tasting new foods. This removes any pressures for your child to explore.

4. Respect a child’s appetite
   Children may take longer to eat than adults. Do not rush mealtime. Allow your child to decide how much food to eat. Save leftovers for a future meal or snack.

5. Offer one new food at a time
   Children are more likely to try new foods when they are hungry. Offer the new food early in the meal. Then, offer your child’s favorite healthy foods.

6. Follow a mealtime routine
   Eat together, whenever possible, in the kitchen or dining room. Put electronics and other distractions away. Enjoy pleasant conversation during meals and snacks.

7. Support mindful eating
   Encourage your child to pay attention to what they are eating. Ask them to notice the colors, smells, tastes, temperatures, and textures.

8. Make tasting new foods fun
   Include dips, sauces, and seasonings to enhance flavor. Make plates colorful and playful. Consider pairing a new food with another food/flavor your child enjoys.

9. Be patient
   You may need to offer a new food multiple times. Persistence and consistency are key! Don’t write off a new food if your child doesn’t take a bite the first time.

10. Do not get discouraged
    Remember that small achievements can add up to big benefits. Praise your child like: “I notice you seem to be enjoying this new food. That’s great! Tell me what you like about it.”

If you choose to use incentives for your child, consider family outings, educational prizes, or decision-making privileges. Avoid using food as an incentive.

Children may not like every food. Teach your child to say “no, thank you,” if they don’t want to eat something.