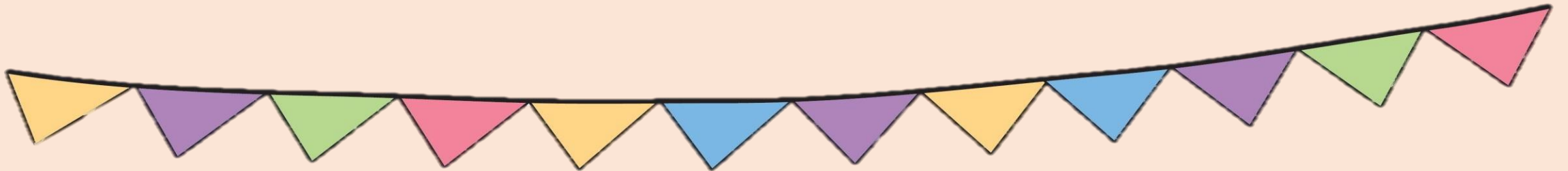


Parents Coffee Morning

Please help yourself to a drink and biscuit!



WELCOME

Glad you're here!



AGENDA

- Discussion around diet.
- Resources/ places to contact for support.
- Opportunity for you to ask any questions and speak to other parents within our community- **you are welcome to leave at this point or stay and chat.**
- Tea/coffee and biscuits will be provided.- **if you haven't got one already, please do!**

Diet- what we eat



How to check your child is a healthy weight

For children and young people aged 2 to 18, you can check their weight by working out their body mass index (BMI) using the [NHS BMI calculator](#).

A child's BMI tells us if their weight is right for their height, and the result is given as a centile (or percentile). For example, a healthy weight result is between the 3rd and 91st centile.

The BMI calculator takes into account age and sex, as well as height and weight.

If you are concerned about your child's weight or growth, contact a GP or school nurse.

 [Use the NHS BMI calculator](#)

5-8 YR OLDS



5
GLASSES



9-12 YR OLDS



7
GLASSES



13+ YR OLDS



10
GLASSES



Kit for Kids
Care • Develop • Grow

Why does it matter?

- A child who is a healthy weight and eats a balanced diet is more likely to be a healthy adult. Children who are over and under weight are more likely to continue this into adulthood.
- Food feeds our bodies and our brains. What we eat and when impacts our concentration levels.
- Different food groups contain nutrients we need for different areas of development.
- in 2019/20, an estimated 23% of children aged 4 to 5 in England were overweight or living with obesity
- Restrictive eating in childhood is very stressful and can be expensive for parents. It can feel like a daily battle and make parents feel like they are somehow failing- you are not alone in this and it can be small changes to make a difference.
- Self esteem- includes any changes we make- phrase them as healthy changes rather than about losing or gaining weight.
- Healthy schools schemes introduced to try and combat childhood obesity and support families to make healthy choices for life long health.



What does restrictive eating look like?

- It can look different for every child:
 - Refusing all food- sucking, licking, holding but not eating.
 - Only eating pureed or liquid forms of food.
 - Only eating bland or “beige” foods (mostly carbohydrates- bread, potato, crackers, plain cereal).
 - Only eating high fat or snack foods.
 - Only eating certain brands.
 - Refusing whole food groups- vegetables, fruit, meat.
 - Wanting food separated.
 - This is not a complete list.

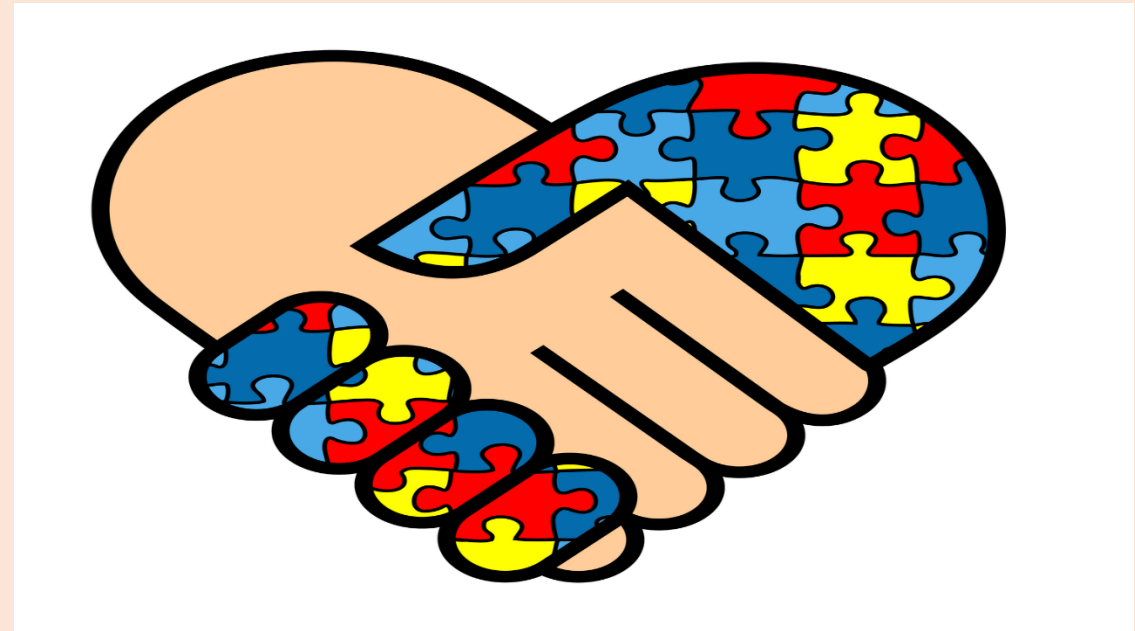


Why does this happen?

- Physical or medical issues, such as illness, pain, allergies, or medication side effects
- Sensory processing issues, such as texture, smell, or taste aversions
- Oral-motor skills issues, such as difficulty chewing or swallowing
- Routine, habit, or preference issues, such as being stuck in a picky eating phase or having a limited range of foods
- Anxiety issues, such as feeling pressure, nervous, or scared to eat new or unfamiliar foods
- ASD or other additional needs- sensory, routine. Please note that struggling to eat a balanced diet can be an indicator but not by itself.
- Mental health- comfort eating, eating disorders.

ASD and eating

- Remember, restrictive diet can be an indicator of ASD however, by itself is not evidence that your child has ASD.
- Usually related to sensory needs, routine, Environment
- If ongoing difficulties persist- speak to your Paediatrician at review. A dietician maybe able to offer further support.
- The following strategies are supportive for children with ASD but depend individually on your child.



What do I do?

- First and most importantly- monitor your child's weight.
- If you are seeing rapid changes in weight- contact your child's GP.
- Monitor their eating habits- your GP will likely ask you for a food diary so if you start this before you go, you have your evidence.
- Remain calm with your child- if you create a negative atmosphere around eating, you are more likely to see resistance and see long term changes in eating patterns.

Check there are no medical reasons

- Tooth decay or ache- visit your dentist.
- Sensitive teeth- sudden changes in temperature of food (e.g. cold water then eating a hot stew), high sugar levels etc. can trigger sensitivity- talk to dentist.
- Issues swallowing- repetitive sore throats or tonsillitis can cause issue (some children then associate food with pain), muscles in throat under-developed.
- Pain when eating- indigestion, stomach aches etc.
- Allergies- rashes, pain, swelling.

Any medical concerns should be shared with GP as soon as possible.



Typically older children but...

- Be aware of the signs of disordered eating.
- **An eating disorder is a mental health condition where you use the control of food to cope with feelings and other situations.**
- Unhealthy eating behaviours may include eating too much or too little or worrying about your weight or body shape.
- Anyone can get an eating disorder, but teenagers between 13 and 17 are mostly affected.
- With treatment, most people can recover from an eating disorder.
- E.g. anorexia, bulimia, binge eating disorder etc.
- Not just girls

Start to log patterns

- What time of the day did they eat? – 11.05
- What did they eat? – Salt and vinegar crisps
- Where did they eat? – In the living room
- How much did they eat? – Two bags
- Who was there? – Mum, brother
- How did people around respond to the person eating the particular food? – Mum praised, brother had no reaction
- Were there any environmental factors? – Radio was on in the background

Log all eating including successes. You want to replicate what worked well.



Make eating a positive experience



- Losing your temper and heightened emotions are not going to support you in the long term.
- Reward the positives (try not to use food rewards as it creates the idea that sweets are good and veggies are bad).
- If child is refusing, remove the food and bring it back later. Doesn't mean they get to go back to playing, they should stay sitting until everyone is finished (if appropriate). Don't offer treat instead of (e.g. ice-cream).
- Eat together as often as possible. Children learn from you. It makes meal times a special time where they spend time with you.
- Invite family or a friend who eats well round to model the eating.
- Interest focused plates/ cutlery



Set clear routines

- Meals should be at a set time.
- Count down till meal times- 10 minutes till dinner, 5 minutes till dinner, 2....
- Has the child got a set job e.g. lay the table, wash their hands.
- Sit together when possible.
- Reduce distraction- no TV, Ipads. Radio may be appropriate (this doesn't work for every child).
- Communicate what is for dinner in advance so they know what's coming.



Giving children a choice.

- This doesn't mean that they dictate when and what they eat, but you as the adult can give them the impression of autonomy using choice.
- Examples:
 - Jonny, we are going to the shop for some cereal. Would you like Weetabix or Cornflakes?
 - For dinner tonight, we are having sausage and mash. Should we have peas or cabbage with it?
 - I am making a curry for tea. What meat should we have in it today. We have chicken or lamb.



Increase food slowly// decrease food slowly.

- If you suddenly change your children's eating habits you are likely to cause the child distress. Instead make slow changes.
- For example- if your child will only eat chicken nuggets and chips. You could introduce a teaspoon amount of a vegetable. Increase slowly. You may give them one less chicken nugget and a plain piece of chicken and change slowly.
- Sensory needs- see, touch, lick, bite (but spit out), chew, swallow = all part of the process.
- Children benefit by having at least one safe food on their plate. E.g. you have made a new chicken casserole to try. Your child likes chips. They can still have the casserole but there are 3-4 chips there as well as the safe food.



You are your child's role model.

- If you refuse to eat vegetables and fruit, it is more likely your child will as well.
- Therefore make healthy meals you both can enjoy.
- Remember, we all don't like something. Its okay not to like some foods. As long as they are eating some things from each of the sections of the eat well plate.



Social stories

Why do I need to eat?



When



I



am



hungry



my



tummy



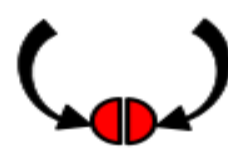
hurts.



Eating



will



make



me



feel



better.



I



need



different



foods



to



make



me



strong



and



grow!

Symbol

First type text

Steps to eating

Steps towards eating a new food

- 1) You eat the food next to the child and comment "this ____ is yummy." (It was important to make sure you had his attention and observed you eating the new food.)
- 2) A friend of the child or a highly reinforcing person eats the food next to the child comments "this ____ is yummy." (Again, it is important to gain attention on this step and all others.)
- 3) In home therapy time, school, and down time, have the therapists/parents take a picture of the desired food and talk about it. Do therapy or sort foods into similar categories. We moved from pictures to actual whole bananas and other fruits into his therapy and play activities. (Remember when mom said "don't play with your food"? Well, forget about that!)
- 4) We then put a small amount of the food on a separate plate NEXT to your child's plate. Point to it and discuss. Eat a few off the plate and comment "this ____ is yummy."
- 5) The big step: put the food on your child's plate. He/she does NOT eat the food, but has to tolerate the food being on the plate. Tell your child "you don't have to eat the _____. It just needs to be on your plate during your meal."
- 6) Next big step: put the same food on your child's plate and during the meal your child needs to TOUCH the food. Tell your child "you don't have to eat the _____, it just needs to be touched with a finger during your meal."
- 7) Getting really big step: put the same food on your child's plate and during the meal your child needs to PICK UP the food. Tell your child "you don't have to eat the _____, it just needs to be PICKED UP ONCE during your meal."
- 8) Now we are moving: put the same food on your child's plate and during the meal your child needs to PICK UP AND PUT THE FOOD ON THE LIPS. Tell your child "you don't have to eat the _____, it just needs to be PICKED UP AND PUT ON THE LIPS during your meal."
- 9) Guess what – the next step includes the dreaded tongue! Put the same food on your child's plate and during the meal your child needs to PICK UP AND PUT THE FOOD ON THE TONGUE. Tell your child "you don't have to eat the _____, it just needs to be PICKED UP AND PUT ON THE TONGUE during your meal."
- 10) Last step – the holy grail: PUTTING THE SMALLEST PIECE in the mouth and finally swallowing the food.
- 11) Note, it is highly possible little chewing happens the first go-around. Work with your child to chew as the final step!

IMPORTANT: Reward each stage with lots of praise and encouragement when it is completed. You can also use sticker charts, extra privileges and small prizes.

Changes in eating takes time.

These strategies work but they all take time and implementation.



Who will help me?

- School- if eating is a problem, keep school informed. We can pass on information about what they will and won't eat whilst at school. Use their favourite adult as a positive reward.
- GP- medical issues. They can also refer to a dietician. If your child is over/under weight it helps to keep the GP informed so they can recommend support. Dietician referral
- National Autistic Society- [Eating \(autism.org.uk\)](https://www.autism.org.uk) and introducing new foods sheet.
- NHS website- [The Eatwell Guide - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)
- Dentist- rule out dental issues.
- Talk to other parents- what worked well for them.
- Financial- if you are struggling to afford food, speak to school and we can sign post support.
- Ollio- free app where you can get food from people within the community- A lot of the time its fresh bakery food, salads, meat. Not about money, environmental aims.
- Social media pages- parenting pages have lots of really good, practical advice. However, don't believe everything at face value and be mindful that "fads" or "quick fixes" don't often work.

If you have any questions, please ask away...

- If you would like to discuss it more privately, I will stay until everyone goes.
- Enjoy drinks/ biscuits.

