



Jules create his own culinary masterpiece. Giving him the opportunity to “make” his own dinner gets him excited and eager to eat up.

2 Reason he’s refusing: It really does taste “yucky” to him.

What’s happening: As humans, we’re designed to prefer sweet foods and dislike bitter ones. Sweet equals survival—think breast milk—and bitter may mean something’s toxic. Some foods might register as a big “yuck” with your child because he actually has more taste buds than you do (we lose them as we age), so the flavor of foods is amplified for little ones. Your child could also be genetically

wired to be more sensitive to bitter foods, as research clearly shows some kids are.

Work with it: You’ve no doubt heard that it can take 10 or even 15 tries before a child will accept a new food, so keep presenting (but not pushing) the options, says Laura Jana, M.D., coauthor of *Food Fights* and a spokesperson for the American Academy of Pediatrics. Stack the odds in your favor by preparing foods in ways that may be “easier” to eat: Roasting vegetables, for example, brings out their natural sweetness. “And sour counteracts bitter,” says Katie Webster, a recipe developer and mom of two in Richmond, VT. “So I

add lemon juice and zest to broccoli, Brussels sprouts, zucchini, and green beans.”

Also try switching things up: Serve raw those veggies your child shuns when cooked instead (as long as they’re not a choking haz-

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ard), and vice versa. The problem may be texture—or even temperature, says dietitian Melissa Halas-Liang, R.D., a mom and founder of superkidsnutrition.com: “A lot of kids who don’t like cooked peas will eat them frozen, right out of the bag.”

What’s cookin’?

Go to parenting.com/pickyeaters for yummy recipes.

He Won’t Eat That? Then Try This!

Ditch the guilt and use these tricks with your picky eater.

Won’t drink regular milk...

Add syrup.

Compared to non-milk drinkers, kids who sip flavored milks consume more bone-building calcium, says a study published in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association. Plus, adding chocolate doesn’t seem to up kids’ intake of sugars.



Won’t eat “yucky” foods... Serve with a dip.

A new study reports that kids who were sensitive to bitter-tasting veggies ate 80 percent more broccoli when given a ranch dip. Plus, after seven weeks, 18 percent called broccoli “yummy.” Score!

Won’t eat veggies... Whip them up.

A recent study found that mixing pureed veggies into kid favorites boosted preschoolers’ veggie intake by 73 percent. Hey, it’s our little secret.