

# Your Picky Eater - Make Small Changes to Reap Big Results

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Picky Eater Solution*



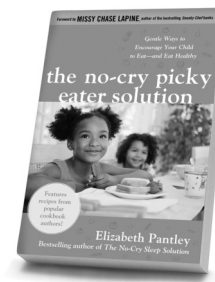
**It can be hard—almost impossible, sometimes—to change your child’s rigidly held eating habits.**

*Instead of trying to overhaul every meal and snack, begin by making a few small changes, one at a time, toward a more nutritious diet. Pick just a few items to start with. Once these become routine, then change another couple of items. If you follow this process, you’ll find that within a year you will have improved your child’s overall diet significantly.*



*Here are some ideas for some small changes you can make; experiment with them until you find substitutes that your child will accept willingly and watch your child’s diet gradually transform and improve:*

- Replace soda with homemade lemonade or a flavored water drink, and then, over time, begin to substitute plain water as the main beverage.
- Substitute high-fat beef or pork sausages, hot dogs, or lunch meats with similar versions made of turkey, chicken, or soy.
- Instead of non-nutritious snacks, chips, or crackers, try pita and hummus, whole-grain pretzels with peanut butter, or veggie sticks with dip.
- Add a healthy side dish to a typical meal. Raw veggies, applesauce, mixed fruit, or a serving of yogurt can share the plate with everyday favorites.
- Add sliced fruit, berries, or chopped nuts to a favorite cereal or oatmeal.
- Serve the same foods as usual, but modify the portion sizes to increase the healthy foods and decrease the less nutritious ones. Slightly increase the amount of lean proteins, vegetables, and whole grains, and slightly decrease the servings of less healthy foods and desserts.
- Slowly reduce the amount of salt, sugar, butter, cheese, and oil that you use in preparing food. Your child won’t notice small changes, and you can gradually move toward using much less of these ingredients.
- Examine your child’s favorite foods and make subtle changes to create healthier versions. By making small adjustments over time, your child’s taste buds will adjust until you can finally replace the old version with a healthier alternative. For example, in a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, replace one slice of white bread with whole wheat, mix one-half sugar-based jelly and one-half fruit-only spread, and replace a portion of the processed peanut butter with a low-sugar, non-trans fat version. Over time, increase the amount of the healthier ingredients.



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*This article is an excerpt from **The No-Cry Picky Eater Solution** by Elizabeth Pantley. (McGraw-Hill, 2011)*