

Introduction to Maternal Infant Young Children Nutrition

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Complementary Feeding – II Issues Faced During Complementary Phase

Hello everyone, so I wanted to discuss about a lot of issues that mothers may face and one of the most important issue that I come across is that mothers they worry that children have become picky eaters. So, what is picky eaters? Picky eaters means their children would want to eat what they want to eat and not what is offered to them and they would, not they would refuse to eat if they are not given their food of choice.

And this is a real issue because like of course in US we call it terrible twos, so it starts around age of 2 and I feel this is completely avoidable you can prevent it completely and the way I recommend is that from beginning, from 6 months onward mother has to remember that she is the boss, she will basically decide what the child wants to eat. And if that kind of discipline continues then you will not see a lot of this picky eating.

So, for example, once baby realizes that he or she has more control and you will see around say 18 months of age and some children if they are very smart even a little bit earlier a lot of time they will reject certain food and then sometimes they would basically prefer certain food and mothers they obviously I mean I do not blame them, but mothers have this tendency that oh baby does not like this so I am not going to give this food but I am, baby like this food I am going to make that more often.

So, what she is doing is basically she is trying to kind of do what baby likes and somehow then eventually what happens that then baby prefers of course more sweet taste, taste which are much more palatable, so baby would prefer those taste and mother eventually end up giving only those kind of food.

So, in such situation what I recommend that babies should basically be given all the food which are cooked at home. And of course, let baby taste it and not to force it, so if babies it takes one bite and then baby did not like it then leave it, you do not need to force the baby to

take it but it does not mean that baby did not like it so now you give say fruit or you give something which is sweet just so that baby did not like it.

I feel that it has to be done very smartly, very slowly but to continue to give that food which baby did not like for at least next 10 to 15 attempts in next one month, two months. Because what happens sometime the new taste it takes baby for a long time to like that taste. And like for example I will just give you my personal example where my daughter she did not like kind of “Baingan” eggplant. And of course, it was we had made this kind of routine in our house and even if she did not like one particular food anytime if I made it she had to try this one teaspoon, of course this is possible when they become a little bit older but as I am saying that all this habit starts from childhood.

So, make sure that you give this, try this food very often and then make a rule for older than two, two and a half you can start making rules that if you do not like it, it is okay, but she has to try or he has to try at least one teaspoon anytime if that food is cooked in the house. So, that way many times what happens is after maybe few attempts and if you make it in a different way maybe they just start liking it and they then they start accepting that new food.

So, do not get disappointed if child do not like a new food, point is to you keep exposing that baby to that new food frequently, so eventually they kind of the food grows on their taste bud and then they start liking it, so that is one thing. Second thing is that many times what happens, this is I am talking about little bit older children, even around say two years of age or so, they start demanding the food that they like.

So, for example, many children say no, no, I do not want to have this vegetable I want to have this “Aloo Sabzi” or I want to have this “Pasta” or I want to have this because I like this. And of course, I mean family would want to make a child happy so what they would do is to they would not give food which is cooked at home and they would make something special for the child which a child prefers.

Now, I do not like that, I mean once in a while, if as a family you have prepared something special and if child is enjoying that is fine but on a routine basis I do not recommend that you cook something special for the child differently, separately. Whatever you cook for the family you have to teach baby or child to eat that same kind of food, you do not want to have “Special Khana” for a child or special food for mother-in-law and special food for father-in-law and all that is it is I think it is very much spoiling.

And if child grows up in that kind of environment he or she will learn the same thing. So, have of like a family pot and teach that child that this is what it is if he wants to eat, eat otherwise he can sleep hungry he will be fine, do not spoil the habit. And once they understand that their demand is not kind of taken care of and they will learn to eat, so do not give in to the demand. As I said special occasions are different, so if you have made special dishes for any occasion of course give it to the child but it should be as per your recommendation or as you wish, not child's wish, this is one way of preventing your picky eating.

And another thing is many mothers have this habit of giving a milk to the child, I am talking about again children who have come off for breast milk after two to two and a half years of age and they have a habit of drinking big glass of milk early in the morning. Now, I do not recommend having milk first thing in the morning, because of course they are rushing to school and we want them to have proper breakfast in the morning.

So, what I recommend is to give them proper breakfast whatever breakfast that you have prepared, healthy breakfast. Avoid too much of “Poha and Upma” it is all basically avoid too much of starch, give them lot more protein and good fats so you can give that breakfast in the morning and then give them milk, but do not fill the stomach with milk first because that child will not have breakfast and that will cause that milk will dip that blood glucose level and then again they will be hungry within an hour or two. So, do not fill the stomach just with milk.

Third point that I want to kind of discuss is many children they have a habit of, you know children who have come off breast milk early on and they have a habit of drinking too much milk and even older children, some of them have a habit of drinking one liter of milk a day or maybe sometime one and a half liters of milk in all different forms. So, not necessarily dairy milk but sometimes they have a lot more “Paneer”, they have lot more “Dahi”, they have “Cheese”, so you have to calculate all the day.

So, I recommend that children should not have dairy product more than 500 ml per day. So, obviously under 2 years of age its mother's milk but other dairy products are your “Dahi your Cheese”, your of course “Yogurt”, your “Cheese”, your “Paneer”. So, just combine all that and it should not be more than 500 ml.

Because what we have seen babies who get a lot more dairy products say beyond 500 ml they have a risk of developing iron deficiency anaemia and we do not want iron deficiency

anaemia in young children because then they will have a problem of kind of cognition issue and it will be irreversible damage to cognition, cognition means the intelligence. So, just remember to not to give too much of dairy products, just you have to control. And some children they just love dairy products and they have this habit of just taking that bottle all day long and they keep sipping on it.

Another point which is important is the juice. Now, please avoid fruit juices in young children, these are all basically sugar water nothing else, so it is all, it is all water and fructose, there is no fiber, there is nothing everything is kind of drained out, so avoid giving anything in a liquid form, best thing is to really you can just give soft fruit, you cut it and they can chew it and if child is small you can just make like a just mash it with hand and children can have it. So, do not give juice or fruit juice or any of those liquid food.

Another point is tea and coffee. Now, many times we see that all these children are given tea and coffee early on especially in urban slum that we work in and they start with tea for by 4 months of age, even older children they have a habit of drinking tea, please avoid giving tea to children and even adults too. Because I mean obviously not with the food which is high in iron because it will prevent the absorption of iron, so that one point is important about not to give tea or coffee or...

I mean another thing also which I see is a lot of these mothers have the habit of giving junk food. So, they start with biscuits and they start with lot of this junk food very early on, so again please talk to mothers and tell them about why we do not want to give junk food to babies, they are completely, they lack nutrient density, those are empty calories and it will cause more problem than any other kind of help. So, thank you so much and if you have any suggestion, recommendations, please write to us. Thank you.