



# TRY, TRY AGAIN

**Healthy habits take time to develop.** For example, the lessons of a healthy diet and regular exercise can take years to teach a child. For an adult who is used to a sedentary lifestyle and a diet of processed food, healthy change can be challenging. However habits CAN be changed with practice, so TRY, TRY AGAIN!

## The Facts:

- **Children often are selective in the foods they eat. However, with time and repeated exposures kids can be taught to eat a healthy diet.** On average it may take 10-15 exposures for a child to accept a new food. However, many parents only give children 3-5 exposures to a new food before they decide their child does not like it. <sup>1</sup> This means many kids are not exposed to a new foods long enough to develop a taste for them.
- **There is a growing number of adult “selective eaters” that have restricted food preferences.** In some adults, extremely restrictive food preferences can lead to poor nutrition and social isolation.

## MAKE HEALTHY HABITS BY PRACTICING AS A FAMILY:

1. **Be an example for your children.** Parents should be the first to try new foods, even foods that are not favorites. Show kids that even grown-ups can learn to like new foods. Adults who are very selective eaters may find help from the growing number of support groups for adult selective eaters.
2. **Encourage kids to try different foods by repeated exposures.** It can take a dozen exposures before we and our children develop a taste for a food. *\*Encourage your children to use their senses when introducing a new food and ask how it feels, smells, looks, tastes, etc.*
3. **Explore ethnic food.** Preparing ethnic foods can expose your family to a different profile of healthy ingredients, and encourage adventurous eating. It is also a fun way to introduce variety into your diet.
4. **Start small.** When introducing a new healthy habit, do it in small steps so that everyone has time to adjust. Praise your child for simply touching or smelling a new food the first time.

<sup>1</sup> Prevalence of picky eaters among infants and toddlers and their caregivers' decisions about offering a new food. Carruth BR, Ziegler PJ, Gordon A, Barr SI, JAm Diet Assoc. 2004 Jan;104(1 Suppl 1):S57-64.