



## When “No Thanks” Becomes the Norm

Many children – from toddler to teenager – often refuse to eat what’s served, and it can feel frustrating for parents. This behavior is quite common for many reasons; another dietitian outlines many of them well in [this Parents article](#). Despite these taxing moments, it is an important chance for parents to create a consistent mealtime structure without turning meals into a power struggle. This checklist could help curb this habit over time:

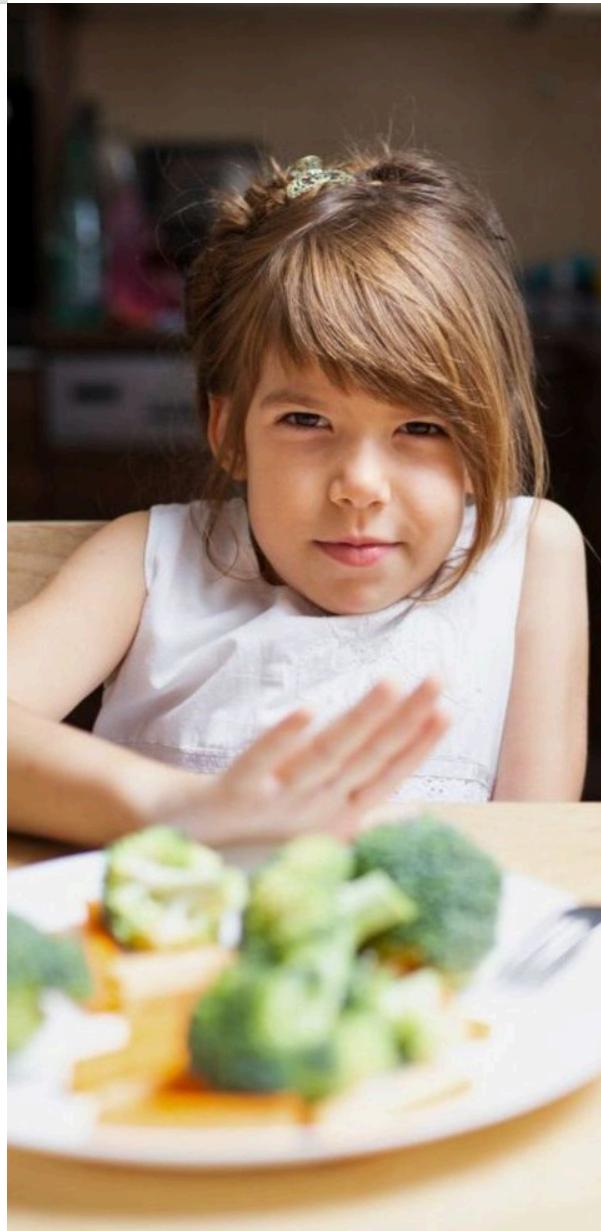
- Offer regular, predictable meal and snack times.
- Serve the same family meal for everyone, and include at least one item you know your child generally accepts.
- Avoid making a new dinner if they refuse.
- Stay neutral, avoiding adding any pressure or bribery.
- Hunger, not coercion, is often the best appetite driver, so try to avoid snacking an hour before meals.
- Find more recommendations [here!](#)

It's never a one-size-fits-all recommendation for what a family mealtime should look like, so do not compare or get flustered. Instead, do your best to encourage healthy, neutral meals to lay the foundation for balanced eating habits as your child grows older.

## Whipping up Some Fun

January 5th is National Whipped Cream Day – the perfect excuse to add a little extra joy (and fluff) to dessert! Try letting the kids make their own [three-ingredient whipped cream](#) and accessorize a warm pancake, chilled yogurt bowl, baked oatmeal, fruit smoothie or hot cocoa with this yummy condiment to make an ordinary meal/snack into a fancy and special treat.

[Three-ingredient Whipped Cream](#)





## Fuel the Flu Fight

Cold and flu season doesn't stand a chance when kids are fueled with immune-boosting nutrition! Think of food as their daily shield — colorful fruits and veggies bring vitamins A and C for infection defense, yogurt and kefir supply probiotics to strengthen the gut (home to most of our immune cells!), and protein-rich foods help the body build antibodies. [Simple swaps make a big difference](#). Pair these with hydration, outdoor movement, and good sleep, and you've got a natural recipe for stronger immunity all season long.

Simple Swaps make a Big Difference

## New Year, New Pantry

January is the perfect time for a pantry refresh to set your family up for healthier eating habits. Start by clearing out expired items and holiday treats that linger. Then reorganize shelves to group foods together by use, shelf stability, or mealtime – [the Food Network has wonderful tips here](#). Consider creating a “kid snack zone” stocked with [balanced choices](#) they can access independently. A tidy, well-stocked pantry not only reduces mealtime stress but also encourages kids to make nourishing choices all year long.



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Abbie Hebron is a Registered Dietitian, specializing in pediatric nutrition (Certified Specialist in Pediatric Nutrition). She graduated with her Bachelor of Science in Dietetics from Missouri State University, and then attended the University of Rhode Island where she earned her master's degree. She is a member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and was the recipient of South Carolina's Recognized Young Dietitian of the Year Award in 2022. In her free time, Abbie enjoys baking, traveling, hiking, and playing tennis with family and friends.

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