



## Feeding Difficulties

in children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) not only impact the child but may impact the entire family. In fact, most parents report that their child will not eat a typical family diet. Family life can become quite stressful when parents need to accommodate their child's ridged food preferences and eating behaviors. Many families report that their child's feeding difficulties dominate family life.

### About Autism and Feeding

- 90% the prevalence of Feeding Difficulties in Autism
- Feeding Difficulties tend to be more severe in kids with autism
- Feeding Difficulties increase concern for nutrition

### Common Characteristics

- Extreme food selectivity
- Selective by food type or texture
- Selective by brand or appearance
- Limited variety (sometimes only 1-2 foods or only white foods)
- Strong negative reaction to the introduction of new foods
- Fear of food or food anxiety
- Oral sensory aversions
- Oral motor delay/deficits
- Intense food refusals

### Common Characteristics (cont.)

- Does not eat family diet
- Obsessive eating patterns
- Inappropriate mealtime routines
- Disruptive mealtime behaviors
- Food repertoire less than 20 foods
- Coughing, choking, gagging
- Over stuffing of food
- Grazing

### That sounds like my child, what should I do?

If your child is exhibiting any of the common feeding problem characteristics or you are concerned about your child's feeding behaviors, it is important that your child complete a Feeding/Dysphagia Evaluation now. Without help, you could be accidentally reinforcing undesirable behaviors (such as food selectivity), increasing or creating food and feeding anxieties or increasing the intensity of refusal or ridged behaviors.

### What can I do at home?

- Set structured and consistent meal times
- Set appropriate meal-time durations
- Require that your child sit at the table with you during family meals
- Set up a visual schedule
- Continue to offer a variety of food without stress, forcing or bribing
- Ignore or time-out undesirable behaviors

## Parent Education

Please see our entire parent education library on:

- Feeding How-To's
- Breast & Bottle Feeding
- Choking / Coughing
- Feeding Refusals
- Transition Difficulty
- Tongue and Lip Tie
- Failure to Thrive
- Picky Eaters
- G-Tube (weaning)
- Autism & Feeding Difficulties
- Oral Myofunctional

.....and many more

## About us

Since 1996 we have been a leading private practice in pediatric dysphagia (feeding and swallowing). We have successfully treated thousands of children with all types of feeding and swallowing challenges, from basic to complex. Please talk with your physician or call us.

### Pediatric Feeding & Swallowing Associates

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