

Red Flags for Feeding Difficulties

Having a baby, child or adolescent who does not feed or eat well is a worrisome, frustrating, confusing, and at some times medically concerning, problem. We understand how hard it is to live with a child who doesn't eat well. Our focus is on helping you as parents teach your child to eat a wide variety of nutritious foods in order to support their best growth. If you recognize several symptoms in a child screening for problem feeding may be warranted.

Infant

- Does not latch well and/or consistently to the breast or bottle
- Coughs or chokes with breast or bottle feedings
- Frequent and large spit ups, or projectile vomiting
- Spits up out of the nose regularly
- Refuses the bottle
- Takes more than 30 minutes to feed
- Falls asleep during the beginning part of the feeding
- Arches, cries, and/or hard to hold during or after feedings
- Unable to transition to baby food purees by 10 months of age
- Unable to accept any table food solids by 12 months of age
- Unable to transition from breast/bottle to a cup by 16 months of age
- Unable to wean off baby foods by 16 months of age
- History of eating and breathing coordination problems, with ongoing respiratory issues
- More than one caregiver reports difficulty feeding child

Child

- Mealtimes are stressful and a constant battle
- Cries, pulls away, and/or runs away at most meals
- Avoids all foods in specific texture or food group
- Poor weight gain (e.g., percentiles falling) or weight loss
- Eats less than 20 foods by 2 years of age
- Reports child as being "picky" at 2 or more well-child checks
- Chokes, gags, or coughs during meals
- Problems with vomiting while trying to eat or drink
- A traumatic choking incident
- More than one caregiver reports difficulty feeding child

Adolescent and Adult

- History of feeding difficulties and picky eating since childhood
- Previous intervention for an Eating Disorder or ARFID did not resolve the food issues
- Does not feel hungry or full
- Foods have to be prepared in a certain way
- Avoids foods in specific texture or food group
- Duration of eating during mealtimes is really short (less than 10 minutes) or really long (more than 60 minutes)
- It is hard to eat in a variety of settings (e.g., home, school, restaurants)
- Eating and/or mealtimes are experienced as stressful and/or fear-inducing
- Struggles to eat meals without distractions (e.g., watching tv, looking at phone)

Red Flags Symptoms Checklist Adapted with Copyright Permission from Dr. Kay Toomey (2021), founder of SOS Approach to Feeding (<https://sosapproachtofeeding.com/>)



Getting Started

We specialize in assessing and treating why individuals of any age won't eat.

Get started with a no-cost, over-the-phone consultation with a STAR Feeding Therapist.

Visit our website at www.sensoryhealth.org and complete our intake form or call us at 303-221-7827 today!

For more information or questions about our Feeding Therapy, contact our Feeding Team at 303-221-7827 or rachel.balderrama@sensoryhealth.org

