

# Red Flags for Feeding Difficulties

Feeding and eating challenges affect people of all ages – from infants and children who struggle at mealtimes, to adults who have quietly navigated eating difficulties for years.

Having a child who does not eat well is worrisome, frustrating, and at times medically concerning. And for adults, the challenges can be equally real – whether rooted in sensory sensitivities, anxiety around food, limited variety, or years of feeling like mealtimes simply cannot work for you.

We understand how hard it is to live with these challenges, and we know that waiting and hoping things improve on their own is not always the answer. Our focus is on helping children, adolescents, and adults build a healthier, more confident relationship with food – and supporting families every step of the way. Every person has the potential to experience more ease and enjoyment around eating, and we are here to help make that possible.

Not sure if what you're seeing is cause for concern? Trust your instincts – and know that seeking support early is one of the most positive steps you can take. If several of the following apply to you or your child, reaching out for an evaluation is a worthwhile next step (this is not an exhaustive list):

## Infant

- Frequent and large spit ups, or projectile vomiting
- Refuses the bottle or sippy cup
- 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
- Was unable to transition to baby food purees by 10 months of age
- Was unable to accept any table food solids by 12 months of age
- Was unable to transition from breast/bottle to a cup by 16 months of age
- Was unable to wean off baby foods by 16 months of age
- History of eating and breathing coordination problems, with ongoing respiratory issues
- Has lost weight, has difficulty gaining weight and/or has low growth percentiles
- Chokes, gags or coughs during mealtimes
- More than one caregiver reports difficulty feeding child, or only one caregiver is able to feed child
- Can only eat in certain places (e.g., not able to eat at daycare)
- Caregivers feel stressed, frustrated or anxious following feedings



## 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](http://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](mailto:rachel.balderrama@sensoryhealth.org)*

---

# Red Flags for Feeding Difficulties

## 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, or one specific food
- Poor weight gain (e.g., percentiles falling) or weight loss
- Eats less than 20 or 30 foods by 2 years of age
- Child reported 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
- History of a traumatic choking incident
- More than one caregiver reports difficulty feeding child
- Cycles on and off foods, sometimes dropping them forever
- Not able to eat at school, parties and/or restaurants
- Has lost weight, has difficulty gaining weight and/or has low growth percentiles
- Caregivers feel stressed, frustrated or anxious following feedings
- Families do not eat together or parents are cooking multiple meals

## Adults

- History of feeding difficulties and picky eating since childhood
- Previous intervention for an eating disorder did not resolve the food issues
- Wondering whether/has heard that symptoms qualify for an ARFID diagnosis
- Does not feel hungry or full
- Foods have to be prepared in a certain way
- Avoids foods in specific texture or food group
- Only has a few/no safe foods
- Duration of eating during mealtimes is really short (less than 10 minutes) or really long (more than 60 minutes)
- Cycles on and off foods, sometimes dropping them forever
- Difficulty eating at restaurants, with friends, or at college
- Prefers to eat alone or with distraction
- Struggles to maintain a healthy weight
- History of a traumatic choking incident



## 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](http://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](mailto:rachel.balderrama@sensoryhealth.org)*

---

