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## Impact of Fussy Eating on Your Child's Health

The lack of variety in the diet of a picky eater compromises the intake of essential micronutrients such as vitamin E, vitamin C, folate, as well as fibre.

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### **Fussy eating and its impact**

The lack of variety in the diet of a fussy eater compromises their intake of fiber and essential micronutrients (vitamins and minerals). Fussy eating leads to a lack of

micronutrients in the child's diet, along with the small tummy size and high nutrition needs, together causes a nutrition gap. Picky eating results in insufficient intake of essential micronutrients, and a situation of 'hidden hunger' (deficiency of micronutrients) arises in apparently healthy looking children with consequences such as:

- a) Not being able to reach the full potential for growth and mental development
- b) Having low resistance to day-to-day infections, due to a weakened immune system
- c) Risk of obesity in future, if the diet is only energy dense (e.g. sweets) and not nutrient dense



Dealing with fussy eaters is a difficult job. But as a mother, you'll never find your mind forgetting about the importance of child nutrition. A number of micronutrients are required for overall development of your child; some of these are highlighted below:

**Zinc:** Promotes normal growth and development and aids in fighting infections.



**Vitamin A:** Aids clear vision in dim light; helps maintain a healthy immune system and in fighting infections.



**Iron:** An essential component of red blood cells; its deficiency may lead to anemia, frequent infections, tiredness, delay in reaching the developmental milestones and cognitive development (learning abilities).



**B-complex vitamins:** Essential for normal neurological and skin health.



**Vitamin C:** Essential for healthy gums; its inclusion in the diet is vital, as it helps the body absorb iron.



**Vitamin D:** Needed for healthy bones and teeth; its deficiency may lead to poor growth; delayed teething.



**Calcium:** Needed for building strong teeth and bones, an efficient nervous system, and for proper muscle action.





It is therefore essential to enhance your child's diet by including micronutrient-dense foods. While you decide the food for your picky toddler, ensure that their diet has all food groups such as grains, eggs, milk and other dairy products, meat, and fish, along with a variety of fruits and vegetables. Don't forget-the inclusion of fats is equally important, as fats help absorb micronutrients. You can also provide your child fortified foods, which will provide these nutrients in required quantities and help Support Bridge the nutrient gap.