

The “Gradual Mixing” Technique

The General Idea:

- Prepare a small amount of a new food (or beverage).
- Add a small amount of the new food to a familiar food your child eats. We will call the familiar food the “old” food.
- Gradually over time, add more and more of the new food to the mixture and reduce the amount of the old food in the mixture, until only the new food is left.

What Do We Mean By A Small Amount of Food?

- The amount of new food you introduce depends on how sensitive your child is to changes in his or her food.
- For a very sensitive child, start with no more than 1/8 or ¼ teaspoon of food.
- For a less sensitive child, you might start with 1 teaspoon or 1 tablespoon of new food.

How Do You Gradually Change the Mixture of New and Old Foods?

- Some children can tolerate a small change at every meal while others may need days, weeks, or months to get used to each change. Proceed at a rate that is tolerated by your child.

Examples and Ideas

- Change an old food in a small way. For example, if your child eats pizza crust without sauce, cut a small piece of crust that has a tiny bit of tomato sauce on it to introduce. If your child eats cereal or bread, introduce a small amount of a different brand of cereal or bread.
- Prepare a new food so it has a texture similar to a texture your child eats. For example, a child who likes burnt toast may be willing to try vegetables that are grilled until partially burnt. A child who eats smooth foods can be introduced to small amounts of hot cereals, fruit purees or pureed vegetables.

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- If your child eats pudding and graham crackers but does not eat them together, crumble a small amount of cracker into the pudding. If your child does not eat any foods with texture, you can use graham cracker crumbs mixed into pudding as a way to introduce texture. Or choose another food that has a little more texture and add it gradually to a food your child currently eats.
- To introduce new beverages: for example, to transition a child from Pediasure to milk, take a small amount of Pediasure out of the container. Add a small amount of milk and mix well. Add a little more milk and a little less Pediasure over time until all the Pediasure is gone and only milk remains in the mixture.

Example:

To this Amount of Old Food	add	This Amount of New Food
4 tablespoons (1/4 cup)	+	½ teaspoon
3 ½ tablespoons	+	½ teaspoon
3 ½ tablespoons	+	1 teaspoon
3 tablespoons	+	1 teaspoon
3 tablespoons	+	1½ teaspoon
2 ½ tablespoons	+	1½ teaspoon
2 ½ tablespoons	+	2 teaspoons
2 tablespoons	+	2 teaspoons
2 tablespoons	+	2½ teaspoons
1½ tablespoons	+	2½ teaspoons
1½ tablespoons	+	3 teaspoons = 1 tablespoon
1 tablespoon	+	1 tablespoon
½ tablespoon	+	1 tablespoon
0 food	+	1 tablespoon

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