

Travel and Feeding Tips Spring Edition

1. Minimize/Limit Changes:

- Try to keep your child on their usual eating schedule, even if this means that they will be eating off-schedule of family's main holiday meal.
 - Don't make them wait for food until the main meal. Avoid the crankiness!
 - When it is their usual time for them to eat on the holiday day, offer more "safe" preferred foods.
 - Try to include at least one food you are confident your child will eat that still fits the holiday theme. For example, you can have apple slices instead of cranberry sauce or plain bread or crackers instead of garlic bread.
 - Have them sit with the rest of the family at the main meal, but don't expect them to eat a lot.
- IF you are traveling- try to stay on your own time zone, if you will be out of town less than three days (sleeping & eating).
 - If you will be gone longer than three days, try to shift their schedule only one hour at a time. Do each shift for at least two days before shifting again.
 - Bring as many familiar items as possible from home, including utensils, plates, cups, placemats, favorite pajamas, stuffed animal, toothbrush, etc.
 - On the days that are not the actual special holiday day, keep your usual expectations and routines for meals the same (have your family members do your routine with you). This includes waking and sleeping at routine times, performing familiar bedtime routine (i.e. playing a game, taking a bath, reading a book)

2. Prepare your Child in Advance:

- Begin talking to them about the trip 2-4 weeks in advance. Show them pictures of the relatives they may be seeing or the house/ location you will be traveling to.
- Tell them what activities you are going to be doing on which day. Drawing pictures of what you are going to do can be helpful for younger children.
- Talk to them about their goal for the trip. This can include remaining seated during a family meal working on their manners or attending a small parade for 5 floats' length. Watching a parade on TV can help prepare as well.
- Practice cooking and serving some of the typical, special holiday foods that your family has AT HOME BEFORE the trip. This can include King Cake, birthday cake, etc.

3. Feed your Child BEFORE:

- Offer them a simple meal or snack of preferred foods that is heavy on the proteins. Don't forget to still offer a balanced meal/snack which includes at least: 1-2 Proteins, 1 Starch, 1 Fruit or Vegetable and drink. This will control your child's hunger for a longer period of time.
- **Don't** make their participation in the holiday events contingent on what they eat.

4. Limit the Sweets:

- Allowing free access to sweets suppresses the appetite for more nutritious foods and can lead to craving more sugary foods.
- One small "Sweet Treat" a day for no more than one week after or as a part of the holiday is sufficient. Tie how many days in a row they will get a "Sweet Treat" to their age. For example, if they are 3, they will get one "Sweet Treat" once a day for three days in a row.
- Do **NOT** make whether they get their "Sweet Treat" contingent on their eating.
- Make sure children know they need to **ask first** before taking a "Sweet Treat".

Adapted from Course #1002 Surviving the Holidays with a Picky Eater from www.spduniversity.org and presented by Dr. Kay Toomey, PhD

