



## **Effect of Picky Eating on Adolescent's Health**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

Picky eating is the most common and prevalent form of eating disorder which is becoming most problematic clinical condition especially among youths. This review paper showed that developmental stage of adolescence is the crucial stage for the onset of several eating disorders and as shown by several researchers, picky eating is on peak among them. Studies have shown that picky eating disorder have an increased risk of incorporating various health related adverse consequences such as obesity, physical, social and psychological problems which can also sometimes leads to suicidal thoughts and substance usage. This review is aimed to focus on the behavioral, physical and psychological health of the adolescent children who are picky eaters.

Key words: picky eating, prevalent, adolescence, obesity.

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### **1. Introduction**

Adolescence is a critical duration of rapid changes in psychological, physical, emotional and socio-cognitive factors, with future health and wellbeing implications. This age group is overloaded with stress which results to various issues like mood changes, physical illness, anxiety, aggression and appetite changes. The most common behavior change is seen by several symptoms which includes swearing, increase screen time (T.V., laptop, mobile phones), lack of sleep and dislikes of food. This age group is also a transitional stage of physical and psychological development of human that generally occurs during puberty to adulthood period of life. Sound nutrition and eating habits can play a role in prevention of some several diseases like obesity, cancer, anemia, type-2-diabetes etc. Eating and dietary habits reflects the socio-cultural trends of society which varies between every individual. Checking the quality and quantity of food consumed by this age group is a concern as the growth and development and future health are linked to their diet and what they eat.

Picky or fussy eating and food neophobia are the most common behaviors seen throughout this age group. Picky eating can be defined as the consumption of an inadequate quantity or variety of foods with the rejection of needed amount of familiar and unfamiliar foods. The definition of fussy eating can vary widely across the studies. Similarly measures also vary and prevalence of fussy eating considerably vary from individual to individual. Food neophobia is a related concept and refers to accept to unwillingness to eat or have new foods. This term has also been associated with child's feelings of anxiety and disgust. Most importantly, it has been seen that picky eaters do tend to have lower or improper intake of vitamin E, folate, fiber, vitamin C, iron which may lead to a weak immune response and other digestive problems. Studies shows that these students tend to consume more of savory snacks, French fries, soft drinks, sugary drinks, sweets. Also studies investigated that the association of fussy eating with child's growth and weight status are reported inconsistent findings. Some studies presented conflicting reports on dietary patterns in these children. Also studies reported an increased intake of energy-dense or energy-rich food items including sweets and other snacks, while other reported limited variety of food items with reduced consumption of energy. Both the patterns can cause changes which are inappropriate in the nutrient composition in the diet that are related to unfavorable growth which means overweight and poor growth and other subsequent health related problems. Also, in previous studies it has been reported that caregivers or parents of picky-eating children conveyed the various problems while feeding them like: avoiding new foods, having strong preference for particular food items, intake of insufficient amounts, preferring specific ways of food preparation. In this, "limited varieties" consists of the 3 sub-constructs of "unwillingness to try new food items", "preference of specific food preparation methods" and "rejection of some specific food groups", like fishes, fruits, meats and vegetables etc. to find out critical behaviors in growth of child. As discussed, studies show that picky eater children consume reduced fat, protein and energy intake. Also the intake of several micronutrients like calcium (Ca), magnesium (Mg) and vitamin E was below the recommendation. Research also shows that the intake of vegetables and whole grains and dietary fiber was significantly consumed lower as compared to non-picky eater children. Also, it was found that the behavior of picky eating children has been constantly associated with constipation in them.

## 2. Result and discussion

This study aimed to access the nutritional consequences of adolescent picky eating children and to access the parent's behavior towards their picky eating children about healthy and unhealthy food. A conceptual model was produced, illustrating relationships between child characteristics (including fussy eating behaviors), parent feeding beliefs, parent feeding practices, the food frequency of various food groups, their physical activity status and parent awareness of food preference development, neophobia and effective feeding practices. Total 50 children were the part of this study. Through a prepared questionnaire nutritional status was assessed by asking about child's anthropometric measurements, clinical features, dietary habits and parental behaviours. Counselling was done and education was given to the subjects at the end of data collection through Brochure (on healthy eating habits). The results concluded that the majority of parents prefer to give healthy, homemade food items to their children for school tiffin, 40% of the subjects consume junk food 2-3 times a week, 28% of females are underweight and there is adequate intake of all the food group by the respondents. In terms of other factors, the results concluded that majority of respondents with 62% do physical activity on daily basis and 52% respondents spends <2 hours on screen per day. It was also perceived that picky eating in children was associated with lifestyle habits in presence of the parental picky eating.

**Table: Percentage distribution of the frequency of food groups consumed by the subjects.**

Food groups		Males (n=25)		Female (n=25)	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Cereals	Adequate	25	100	25	100
	Sufficient				
Pulses	Adequate	22	88	22	88
	Sufficient	3	12	3	12
Vegetables	Adequate	22	88	20	80
	Sufficient	3	12	5	20
Fruits	Adequate	21	84	18	72
	Sufficient	4	16	7	28
Milk and its products	Adequate	20	80	20	80
	Sufficient	5	20	5	20
Non- veg	Adequate	0	0	1	4
	Sufficient	10	40	8	32
	Never	15	60	16	64
Egg	Adequate	9	36	5	20
	Sufficient	3	12	5	20
	Never	13	52	15	60
Dry fruits	Adequate	12	48	9	36
	Deficient	13	52	16	64
Sweets/ chocolates	Proper	6	24	10	40
	Improper	19	76	15	60
Fast food	Proper	11	44	16	64
	Improper	14	56	9	36
Namkeen/ snacks	Proper	5	20	5	20
	Improper	20	80	20	80

Table depicts the percentage of the frequency of food groups consumed by the subjects, there were 100% adequate consumption of cereals by both males and females, 88% adequate consumption of pulses and 3% sufficient consumption of pulses were there by both males and females respectively. 88% males consumed vegetables adequately and 3 % sufficiently, whereas 80% females consumed vegetables adequately and 20% sufficiently. 21% males consumed fruits adequately and 4% sufficiently whereas, there were 72% females who consumed fruits adequately and 28% sufficiently. 80% males and females consumed milk and its products on adequate basis and 20% consumed sufficiently. 4% females consume non-veg adequately, 40% and 32% males and females consume non-veg sufficiently, 60% males and 64% females never consume it. There were 36% males and 20% females who consume eggs adequately, 12% males and 20% females consume eggs sufficiently, 52% males and 64% females never consume eggs. 48% males and 36% females consume dry fruits adequately whereas, there is deficient consumption of dry fruits by 52% males and 64% females. There were 76% males and 60% females who consume sweets/chocolates improperly, 56% males consumed fast food improperly and 64% females had proper intake of fast food. 80% males and females improperly consume snacks.

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