

Children's Speech and Language Therapy Difficult Textures and Problems Foods

Chewing is a skill that children need to practise. Usually children start learning how to chew at about 9 months old. They are still learning to chew properly when they are over 2 years old. Even then some foods are still hard to eat. Children need more time and practice with problem foods.

Difficult Textures and Problem Foods

Here is a list of foods that can be a problem for children:

- Meat: 'Sunday roast' meat is hard to chew
- Mincemeat like in Spaghetti Bolognese
- Tacky/sticky foods e.g. marshmallow, cream cheese, peanut butter, some white bread
- Foods with skins or strings or pips e.g. baked beans, peas, celery, oranges
- Foods with mixed textures e.g. vegetable soup, yoghurt with bits, pasta in sauce, mince in gravy
- Slippery foods e.g. jelly, scrambled eggs, whole grapes
- Crumbly foods e.g. short bread and some biscuits

Tips

- Make sure your child is able to manage softer foods first. They can practise their chewing on foods such as soft cooked vegetables and transitional food textures.
- Finely chop foods so your child can chew them more easily.
- Try softening foods like meat with sauce or gravy to make them easier to chew.
- Offer small amounts of problem foods at first. Make sure that your child has some easy foods to eat at mealtimes as well.
- Help your child put food to the side of their mouth. They will chew better and enjoy the different textures more. You can help by showing them how to do this when you eat.
- Try to eat when your child is eating. If they can see you eating and enjoying food, they will be happier to try problem foods.
- Remember your child needs to practise with problem foods. Don't worry if your child takes time to accept and try these foods at mealtimes.

Loughborough University has a useful website www.childfeedingguide.co.uk

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With **all of us** in mind.