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PYRAMID

TRADE MARK



See registered trade mark label on every Pyramid handkerchief

TOOTAL BROADHURST LEE COMPANY LTD., MANCHESTER, ENGLAND.

If any difficulty in obtaining, write Tootal Broadhurst Lee Co. Ltd., Box 604, Wellington.

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"CLOUDY for strength"

FOOD FLAVOURINGS



Picking At Food

(Written for "The Listener" by DR. H. B. TURBOTT, Director of the Division of School Hygiene, Health Department)

IF your child refuses food or "picks at it," deal with this situation wisely from the very first, or a rod will be made for your own back. When refusal of food happens—and it may begin from weaning time onwards—make sure there's no physical cause. This means a medical overhaul, when probably no abnormality will be found. This negative result is helpful, for then it is only a matter of habit-training and parental control.

When picking at food begins, it is often a reaction to over-attention by parents. Children, tiny or big, all crave attention. If parents fuss over the child's eating, or pay special attention at meal times while he is learning to eat, the child likes it. He loves being the centre of attraction. Should the parents not show so much attention, the child senses the waning interest, and develops some habit to keep himself in the picture. If he finds that refusing food brings an instant response from the parent, he will try it again. Even if he's scolded, and perhaps punished, he will put up with that for the sake of being the centre of attention. And the more the parent tries to get him to eat, the more fuss that is made, the better the child is attaining his object. There will be continued refusal of whatever food-stuff the child has found brings fussy attention from the parents. It may be his vegetables, his milk, or an egg. Mother (or father very often, with a first child), sits over the little one, begging, persuading, promising rewards if only the child will eat. Well, it's a lost cause. The child goes on refusing, in order to get that same attention every day.

The parent, with firmness and persistence, will soon cure this bad habit. Keep regular mealtimes, and see that your daily meals are "balanced"—having all the essentials for health. Remember that a child's desire for food varies, going up or down just as your own appetite changes with the weather, or your tiredness, or mood. So never fuss when a child doesn't make a meal out of the food put before him. You will only create a problem for yourself. Never start a reward system, or make any promise over food.

No! Leave the child to make a meal out of the food offered him. While learning to eat properly, it is preferable to have children on their own at meals. There's a mistake to avoid—don't draw the child's attention to the fact he is being left to eat his meal up, and that you want him to do so! He knows from experience he will not be left "to eat or go without." He will be begged to eat something; his picking at food will be talked about in the family circle, in front of visitors, and across the fence with neighbours, all in his hearing.

Place good food before your child. Allow 20 to 30 minutes for the meal. If he dawdles or picks at food, remove it after this time, and make no comment. Ignore the problem. Leave him to work out his own salvation, and don't allow anything between meals. He won't starve while he's learning that you are "uninterested." Shortly, he will eat everything offered him.