



Food Jaggig: Tackling This Roadblock with Your Picky Eater

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Introductions

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Presentation Objectives

1. Define and identify the implications of food jaggig;
2. Describe strategies that can be used for younger and older children in order to prevent food jaggig;
3. Identify a plan that offers treatment strategies and support to a client who food jags through a case study.



FOOD JAGGING

A Few Myths About Eating

- Eating is supposed to be easy
- Eating has simple 2 steps
- A child will eat when he/she is hungry enough
- If a child does not eat =behavioral problem or an organic problem
(Toomey, 2010)

What is Food Jaggig?

- When a child demonstrates a period of restricted intake of diet (Walton et al., 2018)
- Example: Child only wants to eat Lucky Charms cereal and pancakes for breakfast, lunch, and dinner

Food Jagging and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

- Food jaggging is commonly seen in autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
- Children with ASD are often observed expecting:
 - Same foods
 - Same presentation, brand, and/or environment
 - Same order in presentation

Implications of Food Jagging

- Child will more than likely become tired of the same food in his/her restricted diet and stop consuming these foods entirely
- Will result in:
 - Reduction in overall food consumption
 - Lower intake of vitamins and minerals
 - Higher risk of being underweight and demonstrating poor growth (Taylor et al., 2015)

Other Implications

- Mealtime stress for both caregiver and child
- Anxiety
- Negative talk surrounding food
- Negative associations around food and meal times
- Power struggles

Ultimate Goal Criteria

According to Toomey (2010), children should have the following:

- At least 30 different foods they will accept in the majority of meals and snacks
- Ultimate goal criteria for mealtimes:
 - 3 different foods for 5 meals
 - 3 meals + 2 snacks each day
 - No repetition of foods across 2 days

STRATEGIES



Overarching Goals

- Develop a positive relationship with foods
- Accept a variety of foods across different meals in order to support healthy development
- Accept a variety of foods across different settings

Routine

Everyone, especially children with ASD, benefit from a familiar and positive routine to prepare the body and the mind for the upcoming meal.

Routine Examples for the Younger Child

- Preparing the environment (sensory components, appropriate seating)
- Interactive hand washing (e.g., bubble water)
- Setting the table
- Family style serving
- Fun clean-up activity (e.g., goodbye song)

Routine Examples for the Older Child

- Preparing the environment (sensory components, appropriate seating)
- Assist in cooking/preparing the meal
 - Describe/explore components of each food individually
- Setting the table
- Family style serving
- Helping clear the table/clean up

Mealtime Engagement for the Younger Child

- Make mealtimes engaging and playful
- Provide visual models of what the child can do with the food
- Encourage small progress
- Provide positive reinforcement
- Eat with your child

Mealtime Engagement for the Older Child

- Use of verbal options
- Incorporation of a learning plate
- Focus conversation on foods
- Explore the properties of each food
- Provide positive reinforcement
- Eat with your child

If your child has adequate variety in their diet...

- Offer the food they are food jaggging on every other day
 - Example: If Oscar is food jaggging on goldfish crackers, offer this food on Tuesday, Thursday, & Saturday

For a child with a very limited diet...

- Begin by making small changes to the properties of the preferred food
- Do this at every meal
- NOTE: Make changes to only one preferred food at a time

Changes

- Toomey (2010) recommends the following changes in this particular order:
 - Shape
 - Color
 - Taste
 - Texture

Changes Cont.

- Small noticeable change to the child- we are not trying to trick the child!
- A change that is too big will lead to a negative emotional reaction
- Level of acceptable, noticeable change may depend on the food
 - Example: a child may accept to cut a hotdog cut in half, but may be more guarded about a changing the shape of a preferred potato chip

Changes Cont.

- NOTE: A child must accept a change in their preferred food during several meals before you jump to the next change in the hierarchy
- Patience and multiple exposures are key!

Food Jaggig at School

- Foreshadow the meal
- Create routine as much as possible to reduce anxiety and worry
- Always include at least 1 preferred food in meal
- Incorporate small, just-noticeable changes to foods in school lunches once they've accepted it in the home setting

Recap

- Build positive relationships
- Establish routine
- Engage your child
- Meet your child where he/she is with each food
- Small, just noticeable changes to preferred foods

CASE STUDIES

**Case Study # 1**

- J is a 4-year-old boy with ASD and an anxiety disorder
- Current foods:

Chocolate milk	Turkey sandwiches
Water	Bananas
String cheese	Hot dogs
Hamburger buns	Mini oreos

Case Study # 1 Cont.

- Food he recently dropped prior to therapy: mini pancakes
- J would refuse to eat preferred foods with any imperfections or change (e.g., slightly bruised banana, mini oreo with a chip)
- Demonstrated significant anxiety during mealtimes

Case Study # 1 Cont.

Strategies:

- Reduce overall anxiety surrounding mealtimes with a familiar routine
- Offer preferred foods every other day
- Noticeable differences in a playful manner
- Positive language
- Modeling
- Patience and multiple exposures
- Time

Case Study # 1 Cont.

Example of Progression with Banana:

- Shape: Different shapes with knife/cookie cutter
- Color: Blue bananas when making "banana snowmen"
- Taste: Banana with chocolate syrup
- Texture: Slowly progressed to accepting bananas into mini banana muffins

Case Study # 1 Cont.

Some examples of specific results:

- Banana > banana with chocolate syrup> banana muffins
- String cheese > shredded cheese> melted shredded cheese on other preferred foods
- Burger bun > bun in different shapes> bun with ketchup> bun with turkey meat

Case Study # 1 Cont.

Overall results:

- Reduced anxiety surrounding meals
- Confidence in trying new foods

Case Study # 2

- M is a 10-year-old boy with ASD who previously received feeding therapy from age 2-3
- Current foods:

Milk	Apple juice
Water	Pediasure
Noodles	Marinara sauce
Pancakes	Macaroni and cheese
Broccoli	Ham and cheese sandwich
Cheese pizza	Cheerios with milk
Goldfish	

Case Study # 2 Cont.

- Food he recently dropped prior to therapy: chicken nuggets
- M refused to eat preferred foods unless they were "perfect in his eyes"
- Underweight and frequent constipation
- Significant parent stress following meals

Case Study # 2 Cont.

Strategies:

- Reduce overall anxiety surrounding mealtimes with a familiar routine
- Use of verbal options
- Incorporation of a learning plate
- Focus conversation on foods
- Explore the properties of each food
- Combination of preferred foods with novel/non-preferred foods to make changes toward adding new foods/meals

Case Study # 2 Cont.

Example of Progression with Noodles:

- Shape: varied brands/shapes of noodles
- Color/Taste: noodles with alfredo sauce
- Texture: slowly progressed to adding in chicken breast to newly preferred combination of noodles + alfredo sauce

Case Study # 2 Cont.

Some examples of specific results:

- Noodles with marinara sauce > noodles with alfredo sauce > pizza with white sauce > chicken alfredo pizza
- Melted cheese > melted cheese on chicken nuggets > melted cheese on hot dogs

Case Study # 2 Cont.

Overall results:

- Reduced anxiety surrounding meals
- Confidence in trying new foods
- Increased understanding of food relationships, food groups, and food properties
- Increased energy, reduced constipation

FIRST STEPS



Where to Start

1. Create routine within your mealtimes
2. Foreshadow whenever possible
3. Engage in positive interactions with your child during meals
4. Use preventative measures for avoiding/slowly reducing food jaggig
 - Increase variety of preferred foods within the day across two days
 - Slowly work toward making small, just-noticeable changes to preferred foods

Example of 2-Day Plan for Case Study # 1:

Preferred Foods: chocolate milk, water, string cheese, banana, hamburger buns, hot dogs, turkey sandwiches, mini oreos

	Day 1		Day 2
Breakfast	Banana, chocolate milk	Breakfast	Hamburger bun
Snack	Hamburger bun	Snack	String cheese
Lunch	Hot dog, string cheese, water	Lunch	Turkey sandwich, mini oreos, water
Snack	Mini oreos	Snack	Banana
Dinner	Turkey sandwich, sliced banana, water	Dinner	Hot dog, hamburger bun, chocolate milk

Reminders

- Meet your child where they are with each individual food
- Accepting new presentations and new foods takes time
- Creating just noticeable changes over time will help reduce/eliminate food jaggig and add in new foods

QUESTIONS?



References

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THANK YOU!

Any questions?

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