

# Picky Eater

## Case: F/3 y/o, Kyla, Picky Eater

**Doctor:** Good morning! How can I help you?

**Client:** My daughter is a picky eater. I wonder if you could give me some advice on what I should do.

**Doctor:** Okay Mrs. Smith, I'd like to ask some questions about your daughter. What's her name?

**Client:** Her name is Kyla.

**Doctor:** How old is she?

**Client:** She just turned three.

**Doctor:** Why do you think she is a picky eater? Does she have any specific preference for food?

**Client:** Yes, she only eats some potato chips, candies and fruits. She doesn't like to eat regular meals.

**Doctor:** Does she often drink high-calorie drinks, like juice, soda or milk?

**Client:** She only drinks milk and water.

**Doctor:** When do you think she started behaving like this?

**Client:** 2 or 3 months ago.

**Doctor:** She does that all the time?

**Client:** Yes.

**Doctor:** So you think it's getting worse?

**Client:** Yes I think it does.

**Doctor:** Have you ever punished, bribed or rewarded your daughter to alter her eating behaviour?

**Client:** No doctor.

**Doctor:** Do you usually follow a set schedule for meals?

**Client:** Yes.

**Doctor:** Do you usually give her any desserts with regular meals?

**Client:** Sometimes.

**Doctor:** Does she watch TV before meal time?

**Client:** Yes she watches TV sometimes.

**Doctor:** What kind of diet does she take? How many times does she eat in a day?

**Client:** I began to include small pieces of fruits and meat in her diet; she eats 5-6 times a day.

**Doctor:** Is there any reason you can think of why she is not willing to eat meat?

**Client:** I am sorry but I have no idea.

**Doctor:** Did she have any experience of vomiting or diarrhea after eating meat in the past?

**Client:** No, not at all.

**Doctor:** Does she hate the smell or taste of meat?

**Client:** Oh I am not really sure about that.

**Doctor:** How would you characterize your family's diet?

**Client:** We eat meat and vegetables.

## Test Your Knowledge

- What are the factors that could affect the child's eating pattern?
- Why is it important to ask the family's diet?

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**Doctor:** Does she have any symptoms like constipation? Belly pain? Bloating?

**Client:** She has constipation.

**Doctor:** How many times in a week does she have bowel movements?

**Client:** 2-3 times a week.

**Doctor:** What is the stool like? Hard? Large? Dry? Painful to pass it?

**Client:** It looks dry and hard.

**Doctor:** May I know the color?

**Client:** Light yellow.

**Doctor:** Any blood in it?

**Client:** No, I haven't noticed any blood in it.

**Doctor:** Have you ever noticed any bright red blood on the toilet paper?

**Client:** I haven't.

**Doctor:** Does she usually sit on the toilet long? How long?

**Client:** Not too long, probably just about 3-5 minutes.

**Doctor:** Does she hold defecation when she plays?

**Client:** No she doesn't. I can say that because she feels uneasy and informs right away that she wants to go to the bathroom.

**Doctor:** Does she resist toilet training?

**Client:** Yes sometimes.

**Doctor:** Any urinary problems?

**Client:** Not at all.

**Doctor:** Any other symptoms? Fever? Headache? Cough? Shortness of breath?

**Client:** No.

**Doctor:** Did she ever have similar episodes before?

**Client:** No.

**Doctor:** Did she ever have health problems?

**Client:** No.

**Doctor:** Any hospitalizations?

**Client:** No.

**Doctor:** Any surgical operations?

**Client:** No.

**Doctor:** What about allergies?

**Client:** She has no known allergies.

**Doctor:** How many children do you have?

**Client:** She is the only one.

**Doctor:** Do you have any complications during your pregnancy or delivery?

**Client:** No.

**Doctor:** Was she healthy after the delivery?

**Client:** Yes she was.

## Test Your Knowledge

- Why is it important to ask about the color of the stool?
- Could an allergy affect a child's eating pattern? Why and why not?

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**Doctor:** Being her parent, how often do you spend time with her?

**Client:** A few hours a day because we both have work.

**Doctor:** Who takes care of her then?

**Client:** She goes to the day care.

**Doctor:** What kind of house do you live?

**Client:** Very old one.

**Doctor:** Are her immunizations up to date?

**Client:** Yes.

**Doctor:** When was her last well-child check-up?

**Client:** Six months ago and everything went well that time.

**Doctor:** Did she have any infections before?

**Patient:** No.

**Doctor:** Did you just move here recently?

**Client:** Yes we just moved here 6 months ago. So is my daughter okay?

**Doctor:** Based on what I've heard from you, I think that your daughter's not eating well is part of normal behaviour of toddlers. It's pretty common in that age group. But even though the chances are low, there are some other possibilities of behavioural changes and constipation. So, I'll run some tests to rule them out. Does this sound okay to you?

**Client:** Yes that sounds good.

**Doctor:** For her eating problems, I'd like to give you some hints to make it better. It can be helpful for you to follow a set of eating time. With this, she can naturally realize the meal time and get ready. Also, it's better to cut down high-calorie drinks or snacks between meals. One more thing, eating environment is important sometimes. So it's better to block her from any possible distractions like TV. And for constipation, I'd like to suggest that you give her high fiber diet like cereals, fruits and vegetables.

**Client:** Thank you.

**Doctor:** So I'd like you to take your daughter here soon.

**Client:** Sure.

**Doctor:** It was nice talking with you. Have a good day!

## Test Your Knowledge

- Why is it important to ask for the presence of infection?
- What would be your advice to the child's mother?