

Feeding/Swallowing Issues

FACTS:

- A child with a feeding disorder may not be able to suck on a bottle, take food from a spoon, chew food or accept certain types and textures of food. Others may stuff too much food into their mouths.
- Feeding disorders may or may not accompany other medical issues.
- Oral aversion refers to when a child does not eat certain textures, tastes or colors of food. Some children will refuse by crying, pushing the food away or gagging. Children with oral aversion often like foods that have little flavor and a smooth, creamy texture. A child may refuse having his face washed or teeth brushed.
- A hypersensitive child likes foods that have strong flavors and crunchy textures. The child may stuff his or her mouth full of food and may store food in the cheeks or the roof of the mouth and keep it for a long time. The child may enjoy textures or touch to face and lips. The child may also bite or chew on clothing, objects or other children.
- A child with oral motor issues may have weak muscles in the lips, tongue and jaw or have limited movement and difficulty chewing. The tongue may rest in a forward position on the lower lip. The child's mouth may be open most of the time.



A child with oral aversion may not be willing to eat textured food.



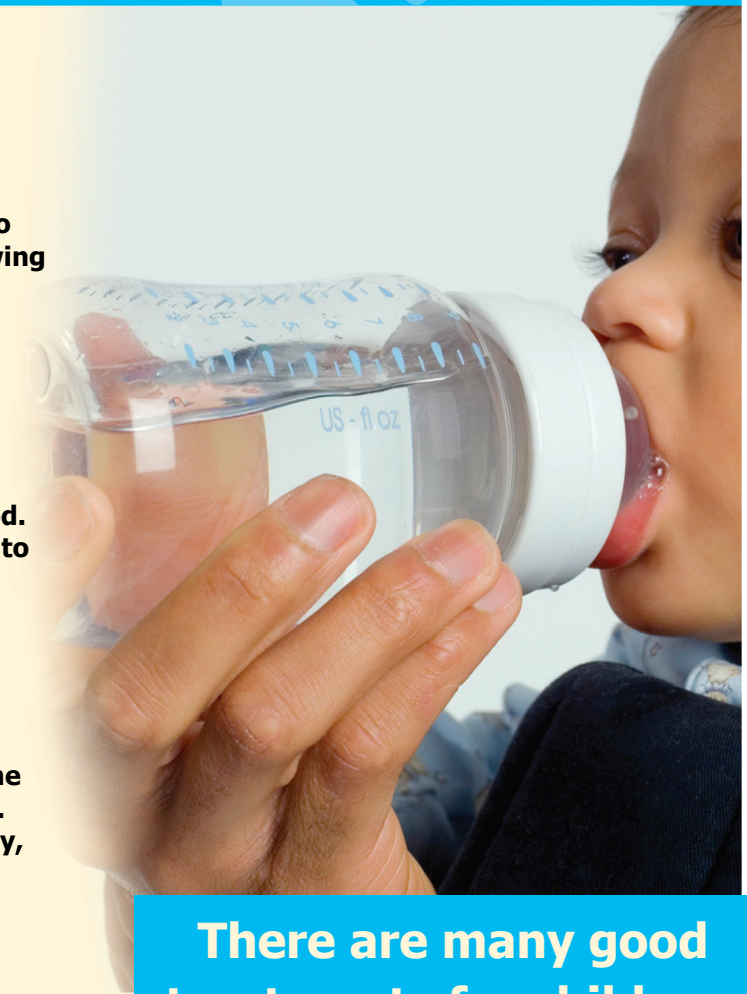
Other children might stuff food into their mouths and store it there.



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TREATMENT:

- Children should be seen by a physician who specializes in treating feeding and swallowing disorders.
- For children with oral aversion:
 - ⇒ Never force a child to eat.
 - ⇒ Offer foods that are bland in flavor and smooth in texture.
 - ⇒ Cover disliked foods in a well-loved food.
 - ⇒ Offer foods that are room temperature to warm.
- For children who are hyposensitive:
 - ⇒ Chill foods and liquids.
 - ⇒ Add flavor or texture to food.
 - ⇒ Remind the child to eat and swallow one bite of food before taking the next bite.
 - ⇒ Give food items that are chewy, crunchy, or sour.



There are many good treatments for children with feeding issues.



With therapy most children learn to eat normally.

- For children with oral motor issues:
 - ⇒ Spoon may be presented in a side-ways position
 - ⇒ Never press against the tongue to keep it inside the mouth.
 - ⇒ Food should be chilled.
 - ⇒ Liquids may be given using a regular rimmed cup.
 - ⇒ Child may use a straw to drink liquids (the straw should be placed at the lips and should not reach the child's teeth).
 - ⇒ Child may blow horns, whistles and bubbles.