Picky eating usually transient among preschool children

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Photo: Agricultural Research Service

(HealthDay)—Picky eating is usually a transient behavior in early childhood, according to a study published online Jan. 30 in the *International Journal of Eating Disorders*.

Sebastian Cardona Cano, M.D., from Erasmus University Medical Center in Rotterdam, Netherlands, and colleagues described the prevalence of picky eating during childhood. Data were included for 4,018 participants of a population-based cohort with measurements from pregnancy onward. Picky eating was assessed when children were aged 1.5, 3, and 6 years old by maternal report.

The researchers found that the prevalence of picky eating was 26.5, 27.6, and 13.2 percent at 1.5, 3, and 6 years, respectively. They defined

four main trajectories of picking eating: never picky eating at all three assessments (55 percent of children), remitting (0 to 4 years, 32 percent of children), late-onset (6 years only, 4 percent), and persistent (all assessments, 4 percent). Persistent picky eating was predicted by male sex, lower birth weight, non-Western maternal ethnicity, and low parental income. Late-onset picky eaters were more often children of parents with low incomes and non-Western ethnicity.

"This suggests that picky eating is usually a transient behavior and part of normal development in preschool children," the authors write.

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  More information: Abstract
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