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Research outcomes

Summary of our findings for parents.

Introducing a novel fruit to 2-4 year-old children – What works?

Little is known about the types of parental feeding strategies that are used during novel fruit introductions and how they are related to consumption.

Twenty-five parents and children (23 mothers mean age: 33.79 years; 11 female children, mean age: 33.88 months) participated in this observational study assessing the use and effectiveness of feeding strategies during lunch sessions, containing a novel fruit. The roles of breastfeeding history, fear of new foods and sensory sensitivity were also examined. Parental feeding strategies, e.g. teaching about the novel fruit, were related to children's behaviours towards the novel fruit. Lower age at introduction of solid foods and greater parental physical prompting (e.g. holding the novel fruit and offering it to the child, encouraging the child to touch the novel fruit) were significant predictors of the frequency of children swallowing and enjoying the novel fruit. These two factors, i.e. the age at which children were introduced to solid foods and the use of physical prompting were able to explain 51.9% of the differences in children's behaviours towards the novel fruit. The duration of breastfeeding and the age at which breastfeeding was stopped were not related to children's willingness to try a novel fruit. Similarly, children's fear of new foods and their sensory sensitivity did not seem to be related to whether or not they would try the new fruit in this setting. Our results provide further evidence regarding the use and relative effectiveness of parental feeding strategies in novel fruit consumption and support findings of previous research on the effects of age at introduction of solids and future eating behaviour.

We would like to thank all the parents and children who participated in this study for their help.

For more information on the study's results, please contact:

Carmel Bennett
Doctoral Researcher
School of Psychology
University of Birmingham
cxb791@bham.ac.uk (mailto:cxb791@bham.ac.uk)

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