CF Care Center Providers,

We are pleased to announce that behavior and nutrition handouts described in Table III “Routine monitoring and care recommendations for the infant diagnosed with cystic fibrosis” in the *CF Foundation Evidenced-Based Guidelines for Management of Infants with Cystic Fibrosis* were published in *The Journal of Pediatrics* December supplement (JPediatr 2009;155(6);S73-93). These guidelines are also available in the Resource section of Port CF. The central purpose of these handouts is to provide parents of children with CF (ages 4 months to just after 2 years) with basic nutrition and behavior management information and recommendations. They are to be used in conjunction with face to face discussion with parents or family members. We anticipate that the handouts will also provide parents with a sense of validation that these challenges are a normal part of development for all children.

We hope that parents will find the information in the handouts helpful in reinforcing discussions in clinic as they work to ensure their child with CF receives appropriate nutrition. While these resources will not be sufficient alone, they will provide them with anticipatory guidance about nutrition and mealtime behavior management. The handouts will also set the stage for parents to discuss nutrition and mealtime behavior concerns with the CF team perhaps earlier than they would have in the past.

**Age 2 and Beyond: How to Manage Refusal to Try New Foods**

**Purpose:** Help parents learn how to best manage refusal to try new foods.

**Topics addressed:**

1. Reasons why children refuse food and how to get children to accept new foods.
2. How to best manage food refusal.
3. How to get children to consume calories when sick.
Toddlers can be a challenging, yet enjoyable time for families. Children at this age are trying to become more independent. They may also resist trying new foods! Both of these factors can make mealtime very hard.

**WHY DOES MY CHILD SAY “NO” TO NEW FOOD?**

It is very common for toddlers to want to eat the same kinds of food, over and over again. It is also common for toddlers to resist many things that they are not used to, such as people they do not know and trying new foods. The key to getting kids used to a new food and more likely to want to take a bite is to make the new food a known food. The best way to do this is by serving the new food to your toddler over and over again to have him “warm up” to it.

**WHAT DO I DO WHEN MY CHILD SAYS “NO” TO FOOD?**

1. Prepare for your child’s “no.” Do not react. Respond by breaking eye contact and not talking about eating the food.
2. Offer the new food in small amounts (such as a teaspoon).
3. Do not remove the food from your child’s plate when it is refused. Even if your child does not eat it, just having it on his plate is a good way to have your child get used to the food and increase the chance that he will try it.
   - Did you know it takes children up to 8 to 12 times before they develop a liking for a food?
   - Most parents stop trying a new food after 3 or 4 times.
   - Offering foods many times can move them from yucky to yummy for your child!
4. Look for your child’s successes! Praise your child for touching, trying, and eating the new food.
5. Parents usually make their child swallow a food once it is in his mouth. This can make children afraid to taste new foods. You can let your child spit a new food in the garbage can after he tastes it. This will help him be more willing to try new foods. Be sure to praise him for trying a new food, even if he doesn’t swallow it! Do not talk to him about spitting it out. Instead say, “I like how you tried a new food; you are very brave!”
6. Instead of labeling a food as one he “doesn’t like” try calling it one that “he is not old enough for yet.” You can say: “I like the way you tried [insert name of food]. It does not look like you are old enough for [name of food] yet.”
7. At the end of the meal, remove your child’s plate. Do not offer food again until snack time. Your child will catch up for the missed food at snack time. Do not make another meal or change foods during a meal. You do not want to become a short-order cook!

**SICK DAYS**

Food refusal often happens on days that your child is not feeling well. Because children with CF can lose weight very quickly, it is important to have a plan for managing sick days. Be sure to check with your CF dietitian about how to best give high-calories when your child is sick. Here are a few tips:

1. Offer high-calorie foods that you know your child likes, rather than a new food. This will set you up for success! Shakes and smoothies may be good choices.
2. Use your praise to encourage your child to eat.
3. Offer your child an extra reward if he finishes his meal or snack. Since your child will not feel like being active, watching a movie may be an option.
4. Do not pay attention to your child when he refuses to eat. If you do, he will learn that one way to get your attention is to refuse to eat. Instead, you want to teach him that he gets attention for eating what you offer.
5. Once your child starts to feel better be sure to slowly increase the amount of food you give and how much you expect him to eat.

**TALK WITH YOUR CF CENTER**

Talk to your CF center at every visit about your child’s eating. Your CF dietitian can help you make food choices, add calories, get your child to eat, and make mealtime fun. They can also help you if you are having problems. The earlier you ask the better! Good eating habits start at a young age and last a lifetime. If your child does not eat well for two or three days you should talk with your CF care center or your primary care doctor.