

Breakfast Builds Brains

Did you eat breakfast this morning? Do you know that regular breakfast eaters are more alert, physically active and creative? Sounds good, right? When you eat breakfast you also tend to be healthier. You're a better problem solver and have better eye-hand coordination. It seems silly to skip breakfast, right?

Here are some tips to a healthy breakfast and a great start to your day!

- Healthy breakfasts include 2-3 different food groups.
- Choose whole grains foods like dry cereal, trail mix, toast or an English muffin (you could even put some peanut butter on it). The whole grain helps your energy level last longer and feel full.
- Pair the whole grain food with a protein like a cheese stick, yogurt, eggs or milk.
- Add fruit to your cereal, pancakes or drink a glass of juice.
- Decide what you want for breakfast the night before & get it ready to go. BUT if you do run short on time, grab a piece of fruit or raw veggies to munch on your way to school.

Fuel up with breakfast!

Yummy and easy lunches that use foods from at least three of the food groups:

- Tortilla wraps with shredded cheese, chopped chicken, and cut vegetables
- Egg salad, whole-wheat bagel, and fruit
- Whole-grain roll with butter or margarine, 2 hard boiled eggs, and carrot sticks
- 8 ounces of low-fat yogurt, whole-wheat crackers, and fruit
- 1-2 tablespoons of peanut butter, whole-grain crackers or bagel, and fruit or vegetables
- 1/2 cup low-fat cottage cheese or hummus, whole-grain crackers, and cherry tomatoes
- Bean-based soup or stew in a thermos, whole-grain roll with butter or margarine, and
Dried fruit
- 1-2 slices leftover thin crust cheese pizza and fruit or vegetables

What's to Drink?

Milk and fortified 100% fruit juice are the best drinks for children at lunch, in that order. Up until age 9, kids need three 8-ounce glasses of milk every day, or an equivalent such as three cuts of yogurt. By their 9th birthday, they require four servings a day. Milk is one of the easiest ways for kids to meet their need for dairy foods. Encourage milk at school by providing milk money or packing containers of milk in the lunchbox. To make it a treat, offer low-fat chocolate milk. If your child refuses to drink milk at school, opt for 100% fruit juice fortified with calcium and vitamin D.

Don't Forget Fun

Every kid clamors for junk food, and an outright ban rarely works. So offer healthier alternatives. Pack these fun foods for a healthy treat:

- Baked potato chips
- Homemade toasted pita bread chips
- Pretzels
- Trail mix or raisins
- Whole-grain cereal
- Nuts or soy nuts
- A smattering of chocolate chips
- Sunflower seeds
- Graham crackers
- Fig bars