

## Breakfast – A “Must Have” Meal

WE OFTEN HEAR that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. All meals are important but breakfast is a “must-have” meal because of the many benefits we all get from eating breakfast. Compared to breakfast skippers, children who eat breakfast have better focus, attention and concentration. They make fewer mistakes on school work and have better memory. All of these benefits add up to higher test scores and better academic performance. Children who eat breakfast also have better moods, better overall nutrition and healthier weights. Studies show that by the end of the day kids get more calcium, potassium, protein and vitamin D



when they eat breakfast compared to breakfast skippers. By serving at least 3 food groups (a whole grain, low-fat or non-fat milk and a fruit or vegetable), breakfast provides key nutrients including fiber, calcium, vitamin D, vitamin C and potassium.

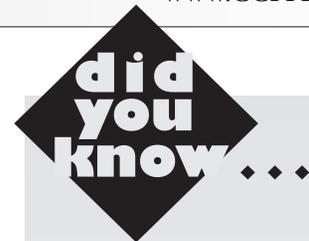
Cereals can be a very nutritious option or not so good. They can be very high in sugar and low in fiber, so it is important to choose carefully.

### Look for cereals with:

- no more than 6 grams of sugar
- at least 2–3 grams of fiber
- 45% or more DV (daily value) for iron
- whole grains

Be sure to read the ingredient list (not the front of the box) because some cereals claim, “made with whole grain”, but don’t contain enough whole grains to really count as a whole grain serving. The best way to know if a cereal is truly a whole grain is to check the ingredient list and the fiber content. Buy cereals that have a whole grain (whole wheat flour, rolled oats, whole grain blend or whole oat flour) listed as the first ingredient, then check the Nutrition Facts label

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### September is National Breakfast Month

- ▶ The word breakfast means breaking the fast after one has not eaten since the night before.
- ▶ On any given, day 51% of children go to school without breakfast.
- ▶ Consuming breakfast improves children’s performance on demanding mental tasks and reaction to frustration.
- ▶ Children who eat breakfast tend to have higher nutrient intakes than children who do not, getting more nutrients, vitamins and minerals such as calcium, fiber, folate and protein.
- ▶ Children experiencing hunger are more likely to be hyperactive, absent and tardy, and they have more behavioral and attention problems.

Sources: Food Research and Action Center; Child Nutrition Foundation/National Dairy Council

### Quotable Quotes

“Cooking is at once child’s play and adult joy. And cooking done with care is an act of love.”

– Craig Claiborne

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to make sure it has at least 2–3 grams of fiber. **A Word of Caution:** If the first ingredient is “enriched wheat flour”, this is a fancy name for white flour and not a whole grain.

Encourage kids to try new breakfast options, such as:

- **Peanut butter-banana waffle sandwich**, when making the waffle sandwich, look for whole wheat frozen waffles that are low in fat.
- **Egg burrito with salsa and cheese**, try mixing spinach or other vegetables into the egg burrito to add extra nutrition.
- **Peanut butter-apple wrap**, use a whole wheat flour tortilla and add a few raisins to the peanut butter-apple wrap for variety.
- **Pizza wrap**, make with whole wheat tortilla, pasta sauce and string cheese. This added protein will help children stay full longer.
- **Oatmeal**, with dried fruit and nuts.
- **Yogurt Parfait**, with yogurt, fruit and dry cereal.
- **Trail Mix Breakfast**, with low sugar cereal, nuts and dried fruit.

When making the oatmeal, yogurt parfait or trail mix, let the children choose from a variety of dried fruits, nuts and dry cereals to make their own creation. Varying the cereal, dried fruit and nuts offered also helps prevent boredom, while providing a lot of great nutrients.



DIY (Do It Yourself) breakfast options are fun and engaging. Children are more likely to try new foods when they are involved in the process and have choices.

If children seem to be hungry soon after breakfast, try adding some protein to the meal to help them feel full longer. For example, hard-boiled egg, nuts and nut butters,



cheese, deli meats, beans, hummus, cottage cheese, vegetarian sausage and tofu are healthy options. Although some of these choices are unconventional breakfast foods, they will appeal to some children and are always worth a try.

The following strategies can help increase the chances your children will eat breakfast:

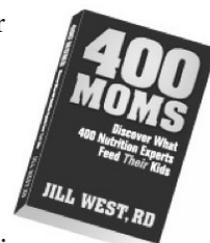
**#1: Eat breakfast yourself.** Being a role model is very important for demonstrating that you believe breakfast is a must-have meal for everyone.

**#2: It's the Rule.** When adults set the standard that they expect children to eat breakfast, children are much more likely to make breakfast a habit.

**#3: Plan Ahead.** Stock up on easy-to-fix breakfast items, including frozen whole wheat waffles, English muffins, bagels and bread. Keep fresh, frozen, dried and canned fruits (packed in juice) on hand such as bananas, grapes, frozen berries, raisins, peaches and pears.

When eating breakfast is a priority, children are set up for success. Children, who start the day fueled, are content and ready to play and learn at their best.

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## KIDS' HEALTH & SAFETY

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# Hand-Foot-and-Mouth Disease

**HAND-FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (HFMD)**, a mild illness caused by a virus called coxsackievirus A 16, commonly affects toddlers and school-age children. It occurs frequently in child care settings and is a different illness than Foot-and-Mouth disease of cattle, sheep and swine. Symptoms generally last for a few days to a week. Adults usually get only mild symptoms if infected. You cannot get this exact same virus again, but there are other viruses which cause similar symptoms, although they occur much less commonly than A 16. Peak times for this virus are summer and early fall. The virus is highly contagious and is spread by direct contact with nasal/oral secretions and stool. The incubation period averages three to five days. The child may then feel poorly for one or two days before the appearance of mouth sores and/or a body rash.

Common symptoms are fever, sore throat, stomachache and tiny fluid-filled bumps or “vesicles” on the palms, soles and in the mouth. These appear tiny and grayish with a circular red base. A rash may appear on the upper thighs, arms and buttocks and may be tender. The fever and vesicles usually go away without crusting or scarring. Children with painful mouth sores may not want to drink or eat. Ask parents to call their health care provider if a child is not taking enough fluids. Treatment is for symptoms only; antibiotics do not help. The child’s appetite will return as he or she feels better. The virus is shed through the stool for weeks following the infection.

Most at risk are infants less than 2 to 3 months of age, people with weak immune systems and pregnant women. An exposure notice should always be posted and sent home when the virus occurs in your program and those at most risk should notify their health care providers.

Children with this virus may not need to stay home as long as they feel well enough to participate. Exclusion may not prevent additional cases since children will have been exposed before the symptoms appeared, and *many children will not have any symptoms* with the



virus. It is necessary to exclude children who feel too sick to join in activities or those unable to take sufficient fluids because of mouth sores.

Limit the spread of the virus by following strict hand washing guidelines. Always wash after bathroom use or diapering and before eating or handling food. Wash and sanitize all articles and surfaces contaminated with stool or mucus.

— Susan Jensen RN, MSN, PNP

### References

*Enterovirus Infections*, Zaoutis, T. M.D. and Klein, J. M.D. Pediatrics in Review, Vol.19, Number 6, June 1998.

*Hand-Foot-and-Mouth Disease (Coxsackie A) in the Child Care Setting*. California ChildcareHealth Program, 2003

## Muesli for Kids

Rolled oats.....	1 cup	Milk.....	¼ cup
Orange juice.....	½ cup	Apple, grated.....	1
Yogurt, plain.....	½ cup	Almonds, toasted.....	1 Tbsp
Honey.....	2 Tbsp	Strawberries, quartered.....	8

**ADDITIONAL ADD IN'S:**

Dried, fresh or frozen fruit, Granola, Nuts, Seeds, Flax meal, Wheat germ, Oat bran, Cinnamon or Vanilla extract.

1. In a mixing bowl combine oats, orange juice, yogurt, honey and milk. Mix well, cover and leave in the refrigerator for a minimum of 30 minutes or preferably overnight.
2. Upon serving, add in the apple and almonds and any additional add in's you wish. Mix well and garnish with strawberries.

Yield: 2 servings

Meets requirement for grains/breads and fruit/vegetable

## Tilapia and Sautéed Peppers in Soft Tacos

Tilapia fillets.....	6	Mild pepper, seeded, minced.....	1
Cumin.....	½ tsp	Onion, sliced thinly.....	1
Salt.....	⅛ tsp	Garlic cloves, minced.....	2
Lime, juiced.....	1	Whole wheat tortillas.....	6
Olive oil.....	¼ cup	Parsley or cilantro, chopped.....	6 Tbsp
Red bell pepper, cut in ¼ inch strips.....	1	Salsa (optional)	
Yellow bell pepper, cut in ¼ inch strips.....	1		

1. Place tilapia in a medium bowl, sprinkle with cumin, salt and lime juice. Marinate in the refrigerator for 1–2 hours.
2. Heat olive oil to medium high in a large non-stick pan. Add peppers, onion and garlic. Cook and stir about 1 minute until slightly softened.
3. Add tilapia and cook for about 3 minutes on each side until white and opaque. Warm tortillas and divide tilapia/pepper mixture between them. Top with cilantro or parsley and roll to eat. Serve with salsa if desired.

Yield: 6 servings

Meets requirement for grains/breads and protein/meat alternate

— EatRight.org

## Activity Corner

### BREAKFAST TRAIN ACTIVITY

**1** Have the children stand in single file behind you. Say, “Let’s pretend to be a *breakfast train*.” Ask them what trains run on (fuel). Then ask them what people run on (food). Explain that food is fuel for our bodies.



**2** Ask the children why it is important to eat a healthy breakfast (a healthy meal in the morning gives us energy to run and learn all day long). Next, say to the children “Chew, chew, here we go!” Jog slowly around the play-space in your single file line.

**3** Explain that you are going to “fuel up” with different breakfast foods. Let children take turns calling out a breakfast food. Each time someone names a healthy, “go” food, such as, fruit, whole grains and low-fat dairy, the train speeds up. Each time someone names a not so healthy, “slow” food, high in added sugar or fat, such as, donuts, bacon and sugary cereals, the train slows down. The more healthy foods called out, the faster the train will go!

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**Food Q: What kind of cup can't hold water?**  
**Funny A: A cupcake!**