

BREAKFAST BOOSTS BRAINPOWER

Brought to you by Froedtert Hospital Dietitians

WHY?

Research has repeatedly shown that a balanced breakfast enhances learning, performance and health for both children and adults. Eating breakfast is a simple way to feel better and look better.

- Children who eat breakfast are better able to recall information, problem solve, think critically and perform well on standardized tests than those who skip breakfast.
- Breakfast, at home or school, helps improve the overall nutrient intake for children of all ages. Kids who skip breakfast miss brain food – as well as calcium, iron, zinc and fiber.
- Eating breakfast can really help weight management. Breakfast skippers tend to eat more later in the day (making up for missed calories) – and weigh more than breakfast eaters.

WHAT?

If you want to stay in tip-top shape mentally and physically, any old breakfast won't do. A donut or a soft drink provides a load of simple carbohydrates that are used up within an hour or two, leaving you hungry, tired, fidgety and inattentive. The best breakfast is a combination of three items to sustain energy and concentration for several hours. Providing a variety of foods gives everybody the nutrients and energy they need to feel good and do well in school (and at work).

1. **High-energy carbohydrates:** Grains (like cereals, bread and rolls) provide complex carbs for breaking your morning 'fast' – along with B-vitamins, fortified iron and fiber.
2. **High-quality proteins:** A source of lean or low-fat protein – like yogurt, cheese, milk, eggs sliced deli meat – is essential for sustained energy and for brain nutrients like zinc and iron.
3. **Colorful fruits and vegetables:** A vitamin pill or glass of juice cannot replace the nutrient bundle in nature's fast food. So, grab an apple, a banana, a kiwi fruit or a bag of baby carrots.

HOW?

Busy families need quick breakfast solutions that fit their lifestyles. It's quick and easy to build a balanced breakfast wherever you eat. Try one of these delicious breakfast combos tomorrow – and watch your family rise and shine – all day long.

- **Breakfast at home:** If you have time for a leisurely breakfast, eggs with Canadian bacon or pancakes and fruit are wonderful. If you're rushed, choose whole grain cereal with fruit and milk; English muffin pizza with cheese and sauce; or a creamy yogurt smoothie and a muffin.
- **Breakfast-to-go:** Need to eat in the car or on a school bus? No problem! Choose a portable yogurt with an apple and a muffin; a PB & J on whole wheat with a "chug" of milk; a slice of leftover cheese pizza and a banana; a tortilla wrap with a slice of deli meat and cheese.
- **Breakfast at school:** Check out the healthy breakfast options served up by the child nutrition professionals at your local school. One USDA study showed that kids who ate breakfast at school had the best overall diet quality. If your school doesn't have a breakfast program, talk to the principal about getting one started.