Smart Choices

A Community Nutrition Education Program

LSU AgCenter Research & Extension

Parents...Get Straight A's With a Healthy Breakfast

Your child's Attention, Attendance and Academic Achievement improve with breakfast

Children who eat breakfast learn better – eating breakfast gets rid of hunger symptoms such as being tired or sleepy, getting headaches or becoming cranky.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Breakfast is the most important meal of the day.
- Any child who skips or does not have access to breakfast can suffer learning and health problems.
- Children tend to copy eating habits of other family members, so setting an example of healthy food choices is important.

The proven benefits of breakfast for your child include:

- Better overall nutrition and healthy body weight
- Fewer absences and reduced tardiness
- Higher scores on achievement tests

Helpful Hints for Busy Parents

- **Get off to a good start**
  Make sure your child has time for breakfast at home or take advantage of the School Breakfast Program if your school operates one. School meals are not only convenient but also an inexpensive and healthy option.
- **Keep breakfast simple**
  Have items available in your kitchen that can easily be put together in the morning: cereal, milk, toast or bagels, cheese, fruit and yogurt.
- **Join your child for breakfast**
  Be a positive role model – eat breakfast yourself and share breakfast with your child when you can.

Quick and easy ideas for breakfast...

Cereal and low-fat milk	Toasted bagel with cream cheese	Toast with peanut butter	Fruit smoothie (blend fruit with milk or yogurt)	Cereal bar with fruit and a yogurt	Hard-cooked egg and whole-grain toast

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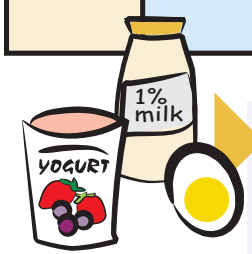
Review USDA's MyPyramid to help your family make breakfast a priority and meet your nutrient needs.

How much does your child need from each of the food groups every day?

Age	Milk	Fruits	Vegetables	Grains	Meats & Beans
2-8	2 cups	1-1½ cups	1-2 cups	3-5 ounces	2-5 ounces
9-11	3 cups	1½ - 2 cups	1½ cups – 2½cups	5-6 ounces	4-5 ½ ounces



Serve a breakfast that includes a good source of protein such as cheese, egg, milk or peanut butter. Serve two other food groups to fill in the rest of the meal such as whole-grain toast or cereal with fruit.

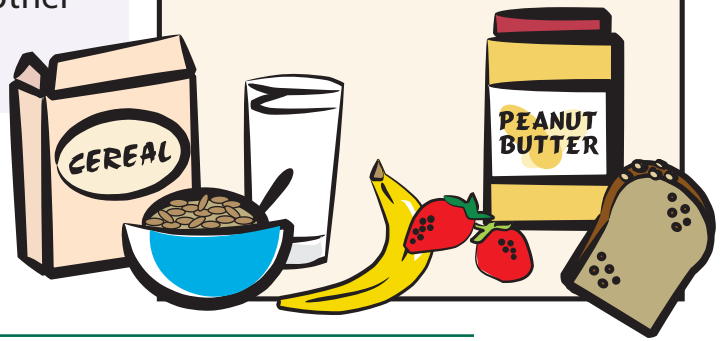
Healthy breakfast foods:

Make half your grains whole. Choose whole-grain foods often, such as oatmeal or whole-wheat bread, bagels or cereal.

Get your calcium-rich foods. To build strong bones choose low-fat or fat-free milk, and cheese or yogurt for breakfast.

Focus on fruits. Eat them at breakfast on top of cereal or add them to a yogurt smoothie.

Go lean with protein. Add peanut butter to toast or try a "breakfast" bean and cheese burrito.



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