Breakfast: Don’t Leave Home Without It!

The name says it all- break the fast! Considering your last meal was the night before, your body is once again ready to be refueled. Breakfast is one of the most important meals you can eat. However, one-fourth of the children between the ages of 6 – 11 do not eat breakfast so they head off to school with an empty fuel tank.

Eating breakfast Improves:

- Concentration
- Problem solving ability
- Mental performance
- Memory
- Mood
- Muscle coordination

When students begin their day with breakfast, they often think faster and more clearly and have better recall.

Children who eat breakfast are more alert, creative, energetic, miss less class and report that they are sick less often. Breakfast eaters also score higher on tests.

Some believe that skipping breakfast may help them lose weight. Studies of adolescents, however, indicate that missing breakfast is associated with weight gain. Skipping meals often lead to overeating later in the day. Teens become overly hungry then they tend to overeat and consume more calories that they would if they would have had a nutritious breakfast.

Hunger, even short-term hunger, decreases a child’s attention span and the ability to concentrate. Hungry children just can’t do their best work. They are easily distracted and become fidgety, irritable and tired.

Adults, including parents, grandparents and teachers, should...
not miss breakfast. This meal provides children and adults with nutrients and energy needed to start the day. Adults who eat breakfast are role models for their children. Attempt to eat breakfast as a family.

When you skip breakfast you are more likely to miss consuming the 40-plus nutrients your body needs to stay healthy and strong.

Breakfast should provide children with one fourth of their daily calories. Those who skip breakfast may not consume the daily requirements of protein, carbohydrates, calcium, iron, and vitamin C as children who do eat breakfast.

Breakfast provides glucose – the fuel that runs the brain and nervous system, that helps you think, walk, talk, and carry on all activities. Without glucose the body has to work extra hard to break down any stored carbohydrate or turn fat or protein into a usable form of glucose to allow the brain to function.

Some individuals have difficulty eating an early morning breakfast. These individuals should try to enjoy a small glass of milk or juice and consider bringing along a mid-morning snack such as whole grain crackers, low-fat granola bars or a peanut butter sandwich.

If there is no time at home for breakfast, the best option is to eat a school breakfast. This meal provides a balance of nutrients, including carbohydrates, protein and fat. A balanced breakfast such as fruit, unsweetened cereal, and low-fat milk provides the energy needed to actively participate in morning classes.

Plan your morning to allow time for breakfast. Make it a top priority in you and your child’s lives!

Reference:
LSU AgCenter (July 9, 2009) Breakfast Remains on Chopping Block, Back-to-School News.

Made available by Beth Gambel, Family and Consumer Science Educator, South Central/Crescent Region, LSU AgCenter