

Date: September 2003

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BREAKFAST SHOULD TOP THE LIST

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Forty years of breakfast-related studies show the innumerable benefits of eating breakfast are worth repeating again and again.

Parents can ensure a healthy start to a new school year by ensuring their children start the day with a nutritious breakfast.

Research shows children perform better in school and are even more likely to stay healthier in later years, including reducing their risk of obesity and heart disease, when they start the day with a nutritious breakfast.

There is also a marked correlation between eating in the morning and better performance in such areas as test results, recall and verbal skills.

Linda C. Stone, M.D., a family physician in Columbus, said, “Children who begin their day with a healthy breakfast are happier in school and more attentive than children who skip breakfast.”

According to U.S. Department of Agriculture statistics, 88 percent of children ages 6-18 have a diet defined as poor or needing improvement. Studies show breakfast skippers usually never make up important nutrients, such as calcium, vitamin C, fiber, iron and folate that they miss by neglecting a morning meal.

“It is estimated that more than half of all teenagers do not get the recommended amount of calcium each day. This is why milk is an important part of that healthy start to the day,” said Stone. “Milk and other dairy products are excellent sources of calcium, and we need to be exceptionally watchful concerning our children’s calcium intake. As a family doctor, mother and grandmother, I make it a point to keep dairy products handy.”

The good news is that breakfast does not need to be elaborate. For example, a whole grain cereal, a cup of milk and an orange can provide 100 percent of the vitamin C, 33 percent of the calcium and 10 percent of the fiber, iron and folate needed for the day. With this simple breakfast, school-age children have taken care of one of the three servings of dairy foods and one of the five servings of fruits and vegetables the Food Guide Pyramid recommends for them.

Children who eat a morning meal not only generally have higher intake of these vital nutrients but also are less likely to gorge on high fat, minimally nutritious foods later in the day.

The Ohio Academy of Family Physicians is a statewide professional association with more than 4,400 members, including practicing physicians, family medicine residents and medical students. The scope of family medicine encompasses all ages, both sexes and every disease entity. Family physicians provide comprehensive, continuing care to all members of the family.



FACT SHEET

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Making Sure Kids Eat Breakfast

- Keep healthy, easy-to-grab breakfast foods on hand.
- Be a role model for your children—be a breakfast eater yourself.
- Encourage children to eat at school if they do not get a chance to eat at home.

How Simple it Can Be!

Take a look at 10 quick, nutritious breakfasts that take only minutes to prepare. Remember, it does not always have to be traditional breakfast foods, but it does need to be healthy foods.

These examples each contain at least three of the five major food groups.

1. Toasted English muffin, peanut butter, glass of milk.
2. Cereal topped with a banana and milk.
3. Heated leftover veggie pizza.
4. Carton of yogurt sprinkled with crunchy cereal and mandarin oranges.
5. Cheddar cheese melted on a toasted bagel and baby carrots.
6. Toasted whole wheat waffle with strawberry yogurt and berries.
7. Tomato soup made with milk and crackers.
8. Instant oatmeal made with milk and topped with canned peaches.
9. Lean ham sandwich with a glass of chocolate milk.
10. Mozzarella string cheese, crackers and orange wedges.