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Are Your Children Starting Their Day Off Right?

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)— Breakfast is an important part of any child's day. Parents can take a few moments to learn some valuable steps to take when it comes to creating a healthy, nutritious breakfast.

“Growing bodies and developing brains require a regular intake of food to keep an individual on track developmentally. This is even more important for children,” said Terry Wagner, M.D., a family physician from Stow, Ohio.

Breakfast is the fuel that gets you moving in the morning. Skipping breakfast should not be an option. In fact, children who skip breakfast do not do as well during the school day.

According to Wagner, “a lack of breakfast on a routine basis can lead to physical, intellectual and even behavioral problems. Studies show that a routine daily breakfast even helps improve school attendance rates. A recharged brain is a more efficient brain.”

So, what types of foods should children eat? Avoiding items that are high in sugar and fat like pastries and doughnuts is best. Instead, try yogurt, oatmeal or eggs.

“The best foods are those offering nutrient rich options from choices such as milk, yogurt and eggs. These choices tend to keep children fuller longer, while supplying needed vitamins and minerals. Whole grain cereals, low fat milk and fruit are also good choices” explained Wagner

Creating a healthy, nutritious breakfast for children starts with talking to them about choices. Once those good choices are made, they are on their way to living a long and healthy life.

For more information on breakfast choices and food options, visit the American Dairy Association Mideast's Web site at <http://www.drink-milk.com/child-nutrition/breakfast.aspx>.

Ohio Academy of Family Physicians is a statewide professional association with more than 4,100 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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General

- Talk to children about making the right food choices throughout the day.
- Generally if you cannot pronounce all of the ingredients in something, then it is probably not something that should be a regular part of your diet.
- Parents need to lead by example. If you expect children to make good choices in their diet and lifestyle, they need to see parents making good choices.
- The first step to having children make healthy food choices, is making sure that healthy foods are readily available in your home.

Breakfast

- Do not skip breakfast.
- Just like with other meals, try to eat a variety of foods including grains, protein, fruits and vegetables, and milk and cheese.
- Children who do not eat breakfast are less able to learn at school, get less iron in their diets and are more likely to have a higher body mass index.

Sources: www.familydoctor.org
American Dairy Association Mideast