



# Why Eat Breakfast?

Created for Wildwood Resources 2021 (1-hour Nutrition)

Your mother was right, breakfast is the most important meal of the day!

In this course, you will learn just why breakfast is such a great idea!

In addition, you will explore ways to overcome issues preventing children from eating a healthy breakfast every day. You will also find activities to help teach children about the importance of eating breakfast.



## The benefits of breakfast

If there was a way to improve your child's daily nutrition, reduce their risk of being overweight, increases their academic achievement at school, and reduce the number of days they are absent from school...would you do it? Of course, you would! Believe it or not, research shows that eating breakfast before school can help with each of these issues.

If you have ever doubted the importance of sending your school-agers off with a healthy breakfast, consider the following:

### Research shows:

- + Children who eat breakfast have a healthier daily diet and consume more nutrients over the course of a day than kids who skip breakfast. Breakfast eaters consume more servings of grains, fruit, and milk in a day. They also take in higher levels of many key nutrients such as calcium, magnesium, riboflavin, vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin B-12, and folic acid.
- + Breakfast is a metabolism booster! Several studies have shown that breakfast eaters are less likely to be overweight than those who skip it. Breakfast "kick starts" metabolism and prevents children from craving less nutritious food later in the day.
- + Breakfast is the meal most directly associated with school performance. Breakfast eaters score higher on achievement tests. Eating a good breakfast can help children to be more alert and improves their concentration. It has also been linked with better problem-solving skills, and hand-eye coordination.
- + Children who eat breakfast have fewer school absences and reduced tardiness. They are more likely to behave well after they are at school. Research has shown that hungry kids are more likely to have behavior problems. Breakfast eaters are less likely to visit the school principal or school nurse.
- + Children who learn to eat breakfast when young, continue to follow this healthy habit when they are teenagers and adults.



## What's stopping you?

What are some of the reasons that breakfast gets missed? Most children skip breakfast for two or three reasons: they are not hungry, they don't have time, or they don't like "breakfast foods". Let's look at some solutions for each of these challenges:



### 1. No time

In the mad rush to get out the door in the morning, breakfast often gets skipped when kids are running late. There are several ways to confront this problem. Consider setting out some of the items for breakfast the night before. You can set a cereal bowl, spoon, box of cereal and a banana out on the table so that it is ready for the next morning.

Another solution is to hand the kids "breakfast to go" on their way out the door. They can eat this on the way to school.

Note: if you participate on the CACFP, children must eat the meal in your home if you are claiming the meal.

**Try:** Fruit smoothies blend ingredients such as milk or yogurt, fruit, and wheat germ in a blender. Pour in a cup to go.

### **Berry Good Smoothie**

4 cups berries (strawberries, blueberries, etc.)  
1 medium banana  
6 ounces lowfat plain yogurt  
½ teaspoon vanilla  
1 cup ice cubes

In a blender, combine berries, banana, yogurt, and vanilla. Cover and blend until smooth. With the blender running, add ice cubes one at a time through the hole in the lid. Blend until smooth.



### **Peach, Pineapple, Orange Smoothie**

2 cups yogurt, peach  
1 ½ cups 100% pineapple juice  
23.5 oz jar mandarin oranges in 100% juice

Open mandarin oranges, pour into freezer-safe pan with juice so oranges are in a single layer, and freeze. Once frozen, remove and add with all ingredients in a blender, mix on high until smooth. Serve immediately as a frosty smoothie or let sit for five minutes before serving.



# Muffin and Milk

## Ingredients

3/4 cup all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting  
1 cup of almond flour  
1/4 cup white quinoa (raw)  
1 tsp baking power  
1 tsp ground cinnamon  
1/2 tsp ground ginger  
1/2 tsp baking soda  
1/2 tsp salt  
2 large eggs, beaten  
1 cup plain lowfat yogurt  
1/4 cup 1% milk  
1/3 cup of honey  
2 6oz containers small raspberries



## Directions

1. Heat oven to 325°F. Lightly coat 12-cup muffin pan with cooking spray and dust with flour or use muffin liners.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together flours, quinoa, baking powder, cinnamon, ginger, baking soda, and salt.
3. In medium bowl, whisk together eggs, yogurt, milk, and honey. Fold egg mixture into flour mixture until just combined, then gently fold in raspberries.
4. Divide batter among muffin-pan cups and bake until toothpick inserted into center of muffins comes out clean. Approximately 12-14 minutes.

## Wrap Ideas

Wrap it up! Wraps are a great on-the-go breakfast. Start with a tortilla (whole-wheat or whole grain if possible).

Some ideas for fillings:

- .../ Cooked apples, cinnamon, and a light smear of lowfat cream cheese
- .../ Peanut butter and banana
- .../ Peanut butter and jelly
- .../ Scrambled eggs, grated cheese, and salsa
- .../ Scrambled eggs and hash browns
- .../ Red beans and rice
- .../ Pizza sauce, mozzarella cheese, and vegetables such as green peppers.



**Have your kids think up their own creations!**

Egg sandwich made ahead of time, and placed in the freezer

#### Ingredients

4 large eggs  
salt and pepper  
1 tbsp. olive oil  
2oz. extra-sharp cheddar cheese, coarsely grated  
4 English muffins, toasted  
2 cups baby spinach  
4 thin slices ham (optional)



#### Directions

1. In a bowl, beat eggs with 1Tbsp water and ¼ tsp each salt and pepper. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet on medium heat.
2. Add eggs and cook, stirring with a heat safe rubber spatula every few seconds, to desired doneness 2 to 3 minutes for medium soft eggs
3. Spoon onto bottom half of each English muffin and top with cheese, spinach, and ham or other ingredients. Sandwich with the remaining muffin top.

#### 2 Not hungry

Some children wake up and are not hungry in the morning. Keep in mind that (almost) any food that they eat is better than not eating at all. Try the above suggestions if they are willing to take breakfast to-go. Perhaps they would be willing to try the smoothie, as it is a drink and easier to "eat" than a sit-down breakfast.

Remember to be a positive role model for your children. If they see you eating breakfast, kids will be more likely to eat breakfast. Try eating breakfast together.

Teaching your child about the importance of breakfast may make him or her more interested in eating something in the morning. Try the teaching tips found later in this course.

#### 3 Child doesn't like typical "breakfast foods"

Do you have a child or children who do not like the typical breakfast offerings? Children don't have to eat cereal or pancakes for breakfast. Breakfast is not **what** you eat, but **when**. Anything that you eat for dinner or lunch can be a healthy breakfast choice too.

Try some of these less-traditional choices:

- Banana dog (peanut butter, banana)
- Grilled cheese with tomato soup
- Vegetable soup and whole grain bread
- Beans and rice
- Burrito
- Sandwich
- Baked potato with cheese and broccoli





# Building a Healthy Breakfast

We have seen that (almost) any breakfast is better than no breakfast at all. Items that are high in fat and/or sugar with few nutrients, such as doughnuts (and are not creditable), would not be a good choice for every day. Let us explore some ways that you can help make breakfast the most nutritious it can be for the kids in your care.

## What to serve

Kids need a balance of nutrients. Think variety and choose foods from at least three different food groups.

For example:     one serving from the grain group  
                          one serving from protein/dairy group  
                          one serving of fruit or vegetable

*What does this look like?*

One example: Whole grain cereal  
                  Banana  
                  Milk



Tip: Choose whole grain options for your grain choice whenever possible. Whole grains and whole grain rich provide more nutrients than refined grains and have healthy fiber as well.

## Vegetables for Breakfast?

One way to mix-up your menus a little is to try serving a vegetable instead of a fruit for breakfast. Most children don't eat as many servings of vegetables as they should in a day. Try giving them a head-start on their day by including some vegetables in their first meal.

Some vegetable suggestions:

- Serve hash browns made from left-over potatoes
- Serve a grilled cheese sandwich with tomato or other vegetable tucked inside
- Try scrambled eggs with tomato, green pepper, and onion
- Try 100% tomato juice instead of orange juice
- How about potato pancakes, or zucchini fritters?
- Serve pumpkin muffins or try Bunny pancakes\*
- Serve vegetable frittata\*

(\*Recipes to follow)



## Teaching Children About the Importance of Breakfast

Children may enjoy learning about why breakfast is important to keep their bodies healthy. Some suggestions for teaching kids about breakfast include:

- Start out by asking the children to raise their hands if they ate breakfast this morning. Allow them to share their experiences and talk about what foods they ate.
- Explain to the children that their bodies need "fuel" first thing in the morning because they have not eaten since the night before. You can ask them if they know what the word "breakfast" means (break the fast). Explain that a fast is a time when food is not eaten. You can talk to them about how their bodies are still working and growing even when they are asleep. Just like cars need gas to keep going, their bodies need food to keep going. Kids need to fill their "tanks" with breakfast.
- Using play food or pictures of food cut out from magazines or online, allow the children to place the foods into the correct food group. Then, have each child take turns choosing foods from 3 different groups for their pretend breakfast.



- Make a poster or chart to keep track of each child and the days he or she ate breakfast. This will encourage children to eat breakfast every day so that they can get a sticker or check mark by their name.
- Be a good role model! Talk about what you ate for breakfast or your favorite breakfast foods. Talk to the children about how you feel when you skip breakfast and ask how they feel when they skip breakfast (tired, hungry, no energy, etc.).

## Breakfast Cereal

A bowl of cereal and milk is one of the quickest and most popular breakfast items around. But there are so many varieties available that it can be very confusing to choose one. How do you choose a "good" cereal?



**Here are some guidelines:**

- 1 Check the ingredients on the cereal label. To find WGR cereal the first ingredient must be whole grain (meaning the heaviest ingredient must be whole grain and the other grains should be enriched). For example, whole wheat or whole oat flour. Whole grains provide many more nutrients than refined grains as well as vitamins and minerals.**
- 2 Check the ingredient list and the food label for sugars. Some sweetened cereals contain 30-55 percent sugar. Avoid products in which sugar is the first ingredient listed (you might see this on labels with names other than sugar such as: honey, corn syrup, sucrose, dextrose, malt syrup, molasses, or fructose). To be creditable for CACFP, cereal must have no more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce. The food label will show the number of grams of sugar in each serving. Keep in mind that this includes the naturally occurring sugars in ingredients such as dried fruits. Cereals such as raisin bran will have more sugar than bran flakes because some of the sugar is coming from the raisins.**

Tip: Encourage children to drink the milk left behind in the cereal bowl. Many of the added vitamins and minerals can be washed off from the cereal.

## Pumpkin Muffins

### Ingredients


- 1 large egg
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 cup skim milk
- 1/2 cup cooked or canned pumpkin
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 1/2 cups enriched flour
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. nutmeg
- 1/2 cup raisins



Heat oven to 400 degrees. Grease bottom of muffin cups or use paper liners. Beat egg slightly with a fork. Stir in milk, pumpkin and oil. Blend dry ingredients together and stir in just until moistened. Batter should be lumpy. Fold in raisins. Fill greased muffin cups 2/3 full. Bake 18- 20 minutes or until toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean.


# Reading a Cereal Label

Look at these parts of the label:



**Serving Size**-tells the specific portion on which the nutrition information is based. Make sure the serving sizes are equivalent if you are comparing one cereal to another.


**Sugar**-Look here for information about the number of grams of sugar in cereal. Remember, one teaspoon of sugar weighs 4 grams. This cereal has only 1g of sugar per serving which is very low.



**Ingredients:** Whole Grain Oats, Sugar, Oat Bran, Corn Starch, Honey, Brown Sugar Syrup, Salt, Tripotassium Phosphate, Rice Bran Oil and/or Canola Oil, Natural Almond Flavor, Vitamin E (mixed tocopherols) Added to Preserve Freshness.

**Vitamins and Minerals:** Calcium Carbonate, Zinc and Iron (mineral nutrients), Vitamin C (sodium ascorbate), A B Vitamin (niacinamide), Vitamin B<sub>6</sub> (pyridoxine hydrochloride), Vitamin B<sub>2</sub> (riboflavin), Vitamin B<sub>3</sub> (thiamin mononitrate), Vitamin A (palmitate), A B Vitamin (folic acid), Vitamin B<sub>12</sub>, Vitamin D<sub>2</sub>.

**CONTAINS ALMOND INGREDIENTS.**



**Ingredient list**- These are listed in order of amounts present in food. They are listed by weight, not volume. Avoid cereals which have first ingredient as sugar. This cereal's first ingredient is a whole grain, whole grain oats, making it a healthy choice for breakfast.

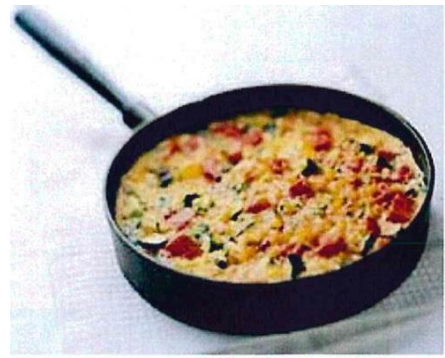
<b>Nutrition Facts</b>			
Serving Size 1 cup (28g)			
Children Under 4 - ¾ cup (21g)			
Servings Per Container about 18			
Children under 4 - about 24			
Amount Per Serving	Cheerios	with 1% skim milk	Cereal for Children Under 4
<b>Calories</b>	100	140	80
Calories from Fat	15	20	10
<b>% Daily Value**</b>			
<b>Total Fat</b> 2g*	<b>3%</b>	<b>3%</b>	1.5g
Saturated Fat 0g	<b>0%</b>	<b>3%</b>	0g
Trans Fat 0g			0g
Polyunsaturated Fat 0.5g			0g
Monounsaturated Fat 0.5g			0g
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>	<b>1%</b>	0mg
<b>Sodium</b> 190mg	<b>8%</b>	<b>10%</b>	140mg
<b>Potassium</b> 170mg	<b>5%</b>	<b>11%</b>	130mg
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 20g	<b>7%</b>	<b>9%</b>	15g
Dietary Fiber 3g	<b>11%</b>	<b>11%</b>	2g
Sugars 1g			1g
Other Carbohydrate 16g			12g
<b>Protein</b> 3g			2g
<b>Protein 1g</b>			
Vitamin D 1.2mcg			6%
Calcium 0mg			0%
Iron 2.7mg			15%
Potassium 20mg			0%
Vitamin A			35%
Thiamin			35%
Riboflavin			40%
Niacin			40%
Vitamin B6			40%
Folate 240mcg DFE (140mcg folic acid)			60%
Vitamin B12			90%
Zinc			20%

\* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.



## Vegetable Frittata with Cheese

- 8 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 Tablespoon snipped fresh basil or 1 tsp. dried basil, crushed
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup frozen corn
- 1/2 cup chopped zucchini
- 1/3 cup thinly sliced green onions or shallots
- 3/4 cup chopped tomatoes
- 1/2 cup shredded lowfat cheddar or Monterey jack cheese



In a medium bowl, combine eggs and basil; beat lightly and set aside. Heat oil in a large skillet which can be placed in the oven. Add corn, zucchini, and green onions and sauté. Cook and stir for 3 minutes; add tomatoes. Cook, uncovered, over medium heat about 5 minutes or until vegetables are still crisp but tender, stirring occasionally.

Pour egg mixture over vegetables in skillet. Cook over medium heat. As mixture sets, run a spatula around the edge of the skillet, lifting egg mixture so uncooked portion flows underneath. Continue cooking and lifting edges until egg mixture is almost set (surface will be moist). Sprinkle with cheese. Place the skillet under the broiler 4-5 inches from the heat. Broil 1-2 minutes or until top is just set and the cheese is melted. Substitute broccoli or spinach for the zucchini. Or any vegetables that you have available.

## Bunny Pancakes

- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1/3 cup all-purpose, enriched flour
- 1/3 cup uncooked farina (such as Cream of Wheat)
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1 1/2 cups skim milk
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla
- 1/4 cup unsweetened applesauce
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 cup grated carrot
- chopped nuts (optional)



Lightly spoon the flour into dry measuring cups, level with a knife. Combine flours, farina, and next 4 ingredients, in a large bowl. Stir well with a whisk. Combine milk, vanilla, applesauce, and egg in a small bowl. Add milk mixture to dry mixture, stirring until well combined.

Stir in carrot. Let batter stand 5 minutes. Cook in a non-stick skillet and sprinkle with nuts if desired. Flip pancakes when small bubbles appear on the surface of the pancakes.

Breakfast is essential for children to stay alert and start their day off in a positive manner. When children eat breakfast, their whole personality is better, and they seem to want to help and interact with others. Breakfast is one of the easiest meals to make and the return is probably the most rewarding for all.

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