



Healthy Breakfasts

Make breakfast a part of every day

Breakfast is an important meal for everyone, but it's particularly important for your child. Breakfast literally 'breaks the fast' from our overnight sleep and provides our bodies with the energy we need to start the day. For children, it's often a very healthy meal and can be a critical source of nutrients to help them grow and learn.

Whether you are a breakfast eater yourself or not, it can be challenging to make time for your child to have breakfast as a part of the morning routine, but it is important to try so your child has the best possible start to their day. Consider ways that you can alter your family's routine to allow time for breakfast; perhaps getting up 15 minutes earlier, or doing a morning task the night before, such as organising clothes to wear.

Healthy breakfast options for young children

Some healthy breakfast options for children who are already eating a range of solid foods include:

- wholegrain cereal, milk and fruit
- porridge with fruit and a glass of milk
- rice porridge or congee with vegetables
- yoghurt with fruit, or a fruit smoothie
- pikelets topped with ricotta cheese and fresh fruit
- noodles or steamed rice with vegetables
- injera, roti or other flatbread with curry or stew
- slices of fruit and wholemeal toast.

Offer water as a drink at breakfast time and make sure water is available throughout the day. Fruit juice is not recommended as it is high in sugar and acid which can cause tooth damage. This is especially important in childhood as damage to 'baby' teeth is closely linked to decay in permanent, adult teeth.

Healthy breakfast options for babies

For babies aged around six months and just starting out on solid foods, breakfast may consist of their usual milk intake, such as breast milk or formula, plus small amounts of solids.

Bland food that is easily mashed or pureed, such as rice cereal, is an ideal first food. Mix the cereal with a little of the baby's usual milk to a soft, smooth consistency with no lumps. Most babies can manage soft lumps soon after starting solids. As each baby progresses with solids, their breakfast may consist of oats or a wheat breakfast biscuit softened in plenty of milk. The next progression is to finger foods such as pieces of soft fruit or wholemeal toast or flatbreads cut into squares or 'soldiers'.

Breakfast helps your child start their day with the energy they need to learn, play and enjoy all the opportunities of early childhood. By making time for breakfast and providing nutritious breakfast foods you can help to ensure that your child can make the most of every day.

This Parent Fact Sheet is available in different community languages and can be downloaded along with references from www.econnections.com.au

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