

FitFUTURE

Strategies for
Better Living.

Taking Time for Breakfast is Time Well Spent



by Jennifer Kerr, MS, RD, CDN

You've heard it time and time again; *breakfast is the most important meal of the day*. And it's true! Breakfast is essential for children (and parents too!). As reported by the *Food Research and Action Center*, eating breakfast is associated with improved academic performance; improved behavior and learning environments; improved nutrient intake; and it provides a protective factor against childhood obesity.

Make time for breakfast! Follow these tips from the American Dietetic Association:

- **Get ready the night before:** Set the table with bowls and spoons for cereal. Get out a pan for pancakes or a blender for smoothies. Slice up some fruit and low-fat cheese.
- **Keep it simple:** Fancy breakfasts are wonderful when you have the time. On busy days, a sandwich, a slice of leftover veggie pizza or low-fat yogurt with fruit is just fine.
- **Pack to go:** If there's no time to eat at home, take your nutrition to-go. Pack a brown bag breakfast for the road—or see if your child's school offers a breakfast program.
- **Include carbohydrates:** A high-octane carbohydrate energizes your body and brain for a busy day. Think cereal (hot or cold), bread, dinner rolls, tortillas, or even leftover rice or pasta. Choose whole grains for an extra nutrition punch (more fiber and nutrients).
- **Include protein:** This is the missing link in most morning meals. Protein is what we need to go strong until lunch. Think a slice of Canadian bacon, an egg, a slice of lean deli meat or low-fat cheese, a container of low-fat yogurt, a scoop of low-fat cottage cheese, or a handful of nuts.
- **Include fruit:** It's quick and easy to add color and nutrition to your breakfast with your favorite fruits. Think fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruit – like apples, berries, pears, bananas, grapefruit, kiwi, mangoes, oranges, or pineapple. Another great option is avocados. They are high in unsaturated (or good) fat and contain vitamin C, thiamin, riboflavin and beta carotene, which forms vitamin A.



For more information about the importance of breakfast:

Food Research & Action Center, <http://www.frac.com>
American Dietetic Association <http://www.eatright.org>

