



## Back To School Tips

The latest research suggests that children and adolescents who do not eat a healthy breakfast are at a higher risk of being overweight.

### What should you eat for breakfast?

A healthy breakfast that will fuel your morning should contain a combination of nutrient- and fiber-rich carbohydrates such as whole grains, fruits, vegetables and some lean protein sources such as low fat dairy.

### What should you eat for lunch?

A healthy lunch will help you get through the rest of your school day. It will help you focus better and learn more. Whether you pack or buy your lunch, be sure to include a variety of health foods.

Children who skip lunch are more likely to overeat at dinner or snack on low nutrient foods when they get home.

Let your child help pack their lunch. Give them different options, so they do not get bored. Many times, we eat with our eyes first, so make items colorful.

# Making Breakfast a Habit

**You** have heard it time and time again: Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Why is that so? When you wake up in the morning, you have just gone 8 hours without food or water. (Breakfast literally means to “break the fast”) Making time for breakfast on busy mornings can be a challenge. But eating a healthy breakfast will give your child the energy he needs, improve concentration, creativity and alertness after fasting all night long. Here are some easy ways to build a daily breakfast routine:

## **Get started the night before.**

Have your child set out plates, bowls, silverware, and glasses in advance. Meanwhile, you can get a jump on breakfast by hard-boiling eggs or preparing a breakfast casserole. This will save you minutes in the morning when you are trying to get everyone out the door to school or work.

## **Breakfast is good for maintaining a healthy weight!**

Eating breakfast actually help you lose weight! Those who skip breakfast tend to snack before lunch and during the day, usually on unhealthy, high calorie foods. Breakfast eaters typically cruise through the morning, full of energy.

## **Don't forget protein in the morning for a good start to the day.**

Carbohydrates are a great source of energy, but carbs alone don't give you a feeling of fullness for long. Match your carbs with protein and a little fat and you will feel satisfied longer. For example, try a slice of whole wheat toast topped with peanut butter.

## **Vary the options.**

Just because breakfast is in the morning doesn't mean you can only eat breakfast food! If you don't like eggs and toast, try a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Check out these ideas:

## **Smart Ideas for Breakfast on the Go**

1. Single-serving bowls of whole-grain cereal are packed with vitamins and minerals. Try Kashi Go Lean Crunch for a fiber-packed morning.
2. Bake bran muffins early in the week, then grab one or two each morning.
3. Small cartons of lowfat yogurt are a good combination of protein and carbohydrates. Top with Homemade Granola (recipe on next page).
4. Prepare a casserole the night before. Pop it in the oven when you wake up and it will be ready to go when you are.
5. Pair string cheese with whole wheat crackers. Complete with fresh fruit.
6. Top whole wheat toaster waffles with a tablespoon of peanut butter or fruit preserves.
7. Hard boil several eggs to have on hand for busy mornings.
8. Whole grain English muffins can serve as a base for breakfast sandwiches. Top with peanut butter and raisins or lowfat cheese slices to provide protein and healthy fats.
9. Try breakfast wraps made with whole wheat tortillas; roll in protein, such as scrambled eggs, peanut butter and bananas, or cold turkey and cheese.
10. Make a smoothie or shake. Blend fruit and yogurt to drink. Add some finger foods, such as granola or grapes.

# Making Lunch a Hit

## Ideas of Foods to Pack:

- Conventional sandwiches deli meat, peanut butter and jelly, cheese, bagel and cream cheese, bagel and peanut butter, vegetarian pita pocket, tuna fish
- Unconventional sandwiches humus and pita bread, falafel, cheese and crackers, cream cheese and jelly, sunflower butter, soy-nut butter, wrap filled with vegetables and cheese or deli meats, quesadilla, calzone, and Stromboli, Canadian bacon with lettuce and tomato
- Conventional alternatives to sandwiches dinner leftovers (meat/chicken/fish/pork, grain, pasta or potatoes, vegetables), cheese and crackers, leftover pizza, soup or stew, takeout leftovers
- Unconventional alternatives to sandwiches single-serving cereal or cereal from home in storage container (just add milk), scrambled eggs or hardboiled eggs, yogurt with granola, quiche, chili, pancakes or waffles, nuts, filled croissant, homemade smoothies, bean salad, homemade muffin
- Fruits apple, pear, banana, grapes, berries, oranges, grapefruit sections, canned fruit in juice, fruit cocktail, grapefruit sections, cherries, pineapple chunks, melon, pomegranate, guava, papaya, tangerines, clementine, fruit salad
- Vegetables to eat raw, steamed, or with dip cucumber slices, celery, carrots, green beans, snow peas, blanched broccoli, asparagus or cauliflower, grape tomatoes, beets, corn, salad, guacamole, bean salad
- Snacks fruit leather, sunflower seeds, baked potato chips, pretzels, multigrain crackers, high-fiber granola bar, graham crackers, unsweetened applesauce, multigrain chips or tortilla, dried fruit, nuts, tube yogurt (try freezing), cereal bars, dry cereal, banana chips, dried peas, breadsticks

## Lunch Box Suggestions for Children

- Buy 8-fl-oz bottles of water or fill several water bottles, and keep the refrigerator stocked for the week; in the summer months, you may choose to freeze these, so the ice is melted into cold water by lunch
- Have your child purchase milk, chocolate milk or orange juice, if possible, at school; this way you don't have to worry about packing a drink, spoilage, or leaking
- Know what to pack
- It's OK if your child likes to have a conventional lunch that includes a sandwich, fruit, vegetables, snack item, and a drink
- If your kid prefers to "pick" and does better with yogurt or cheese, for example, make sure you balance the meal so that it contains protein, fruit and/or vegetables, some carbohydrate, and fat
- Involve your child in packing the lunch, as much as possible; older children can often prepare and pack their own lunch with adult supervision
- If you are planning to pack dinner leftovers for lunch, pack the storage container as you are cleaning up for dinner, this saves time
- Get your child their favorite character on a lunch box, this can make it more fun them to pack.

THERE IS AN OLD ADAGE  
THAT SAYS

“EAT BREAKFAST LIKE A  
KING,  
LUNCH LIKE A PRINCE AND  
DINNER LIKE A PAUPER”.

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## Keep School Lunches from Spoiling

When packing your child's lunch, you're not just picking nutritious options; you're packing a meal that can make the journey safely from kitchen to lunchroom.

Follow these tips to keep packed lunches both tasting good and safe-to-eat:

- **Keep it clean.** Wash your hands before preparing your child's lunch and clean your child's bag or lunch box with warm soapy water before each use.
- **Keep it cold.** If you include perishable items, keep them properly chilled with an insulated lunch bag and ice pack. Don't have an ice pack? Use a frozen water bottle. It works just as well and doubles as a refreshing noon-time drink.
- **Opt for non-perishable options.** Swap out foods that spoil easily with more shelf-stable options. Trail mix, granola bars, bagels, carrot sticks, whole fruit, single-serve apple sauce, cans of tuna and peanut butter are all good picks.
- **Rinse fruits.** Bathe both ready-to-eat fruits (apples, grapes, berries) and fruits with a peel (oranges, bananas) in cold water. Washing the outer layer of all fruits eliminates harmful bacteria that can spread during peeling or cutting.

And don't forget to teach your child to properly lather up before digging in. Encourage at least 20 seconds of hand washing in warm, soapy water before each meal — about the time it takes to sing two choruses of "Happy Birthday."

## School Lunch: Brown Bagging It

Children are headed back to school, and packing a lunch can ensure healthy options that fit your child's taste buds. Just make sure to plan ahead, since last-minute choices often rely on fat-laden pre-packaged foods. Try these tips:

- Involve your child in the planning process. This will make it less likely that lunchbox items will get traded or tossed.
- Can the soda. One 12-ounce serving can contain as much as 12 teaspoons of sugar. Pack a water bottle or 100-percent juice box instead.
- Change it up. Keep lunches interesting by varying the contents. Go heavy on veggies, fruits and whole grains.

Children tend to copy our behavior, so set an example. Eat healthy at home, and consider packing your own healthy lunch to take to work.

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