

Benefits of Students Eating Breakfast

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A daily breakfast can perk up kids while they are at school.

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Breakfast may be known as the most important meal of the day, but in many families, children are used to starting the day without the morning meal. In fact, up to 30 percent of children ages 8 to 13 don't eat breakfast every day, reports the University of Florida. Making sure your kids eat a daily breakfast is one of the simplest ways to improve their health, behavior and school performance.

Health

In an era when childhood obesity is a rapidly growing problem, a regular breakfast may be part of the solution. Kids who eat breakfast are less likely to be overweight; this may be due to the fact that people who skip meals usually eat more calories the rest of the day. Breakfast also gives kids an opportunity to take in essential nutrients; fewer meals means fewer chances to get the many vitamins and minerals their bodies need. That's why it's not just eating breakfast that counts, but making the most of the meal by choosing nutrient-rich foods.

Behavior and Performance

Breakfast doesn't just fill the stomach, it can also help children improve their academic performance. Kids who eat breakfast have higher test scores, superior concentration and better muscle coordination, and they're less likely to miss classes or report to school late, according to the University of Florida. Breakfast eaters also tend to exhibit better classroom behavior, and perform better in certain subjects like math, reports Dr. Ronald E. Kleinman, chief of pediatric gastroenterology and nutrition at Boston's Massachusetts General Hospital and professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School.

Creating Healthy Habits

An occasional skipped breakfast is nothing to be concerned about, but kids of all ages should be in the habit of eating before starting the day. One of the best ways to establish a breakfast habit is for families to sit down

together at the breakfast table every morning. Children who see their parents eating and enjoying breakfast are more likely to do the same, according to the University of Florida. Involving your kids in the food shopping and meal preparation can also create more interest in breakfast, especially if you allow them the freedom to choose some of their own foods.

Breakfast Ideas

If your children complain about not enjoying breakfast, or they're easily bored with the morning meal, offer different breakfast options or change up the menu from week to week. If the whole family is in a breakfast rut, remember that the meal doesn't have to include typical breakfast foods like eggs, cereal or waffles. Healthy and filling are the only real requirements, so try serving a turkey and cheese sandwich on whole wheat bread, a bean, egg and cheese burrito, egg salad on toast, pasta with sautéed vegetables or even leftovers from last night's dinner.