

# Back to School – Avoiding Breakfast-Time Dilemmas

“Early to bed, early to rise, makes a person healthy, wealthy, and wise.” A common saying, but “early to rise” can sometimes be a challenge with school kids. Oversleeping often results in kids off to school without breakfast. The benefits of breakfast are countless. It’s the most important meal of the day. A well-balanced and well-planned breakfast provides whole grains, calcium, vitamin D, folate, magnesium, zinc, and iron that support optimal growth. Research has shown that kids and adolescents who eat breakfast may have better concentration, increased alertness and energy, as well as improved testing scores. Evidence also indicates that individuals who skip breakfast in the hope of losing weight actually produce the opposite outcome by overeating at lunch!

Many children are struggling with weight issues these days. So it is important to teach good habits while children are young, as healthy habits become part of their daily route. If your child is struggling with weight issues, help them get to a healthy weight by eating sensibly and beginning each day with a nutritious breakfast.

## The Night Before

- Set a routine — teeth brushing, reading, and other bed-time rituals.
- Plan breakfast — consider a bowl of Whole Grain, Smart Sugar cereal with fruit and low-fat milk or prepare pancake mix the night before. Then it’s easy to heat up the griddle and cook. Add some fresh fruit and enjoy with a glass of low-fat milk.

## Even If You Wake Up Late

- Heart Health, Smart Sugar yogurt (6 oz.) and a banana
- A slice of whole wheat toast with peanut butter and low-fat milk
- Appropriate portion of a Whole Grain, Smart Sugar cereal in a zipper bag with a cup of low-fat milk and pear slices
- A container with low-fat peanut butter, using tasty apple slices as spoons

## Plan Snacks

Sending a planned snack to school will help ease hunger before lunch and help to prevent overeating. It may also help older kids stay away from the vending machines! Try:

- A Whole Grain granola bar
- Lightly salted (or no salt) popcorn
- A bunch of grapes or other fruits and veggies (already cut up and easy to eat)
- A 100% Juice box (6 oz. or less) with Whole Grain crackers and cheese

Meals and snacks with Whole Grain, fruits, vegetables, and 100% Juice can all be part of a heart-healthy diet that all can enjoy! Good nutrition isn’t difficult — we just have to know where to start! Getting kids to enjoy a healthy breakfast will never be a “dilemma” if we plan ahead. Check out September’s article for tips on avoiding lunch-time dilemmas.

And look for the following Keys to Better Health™ icons during your back-to-school grocery shopping trip:

- |                 |              |               |
|-----------------|--------------|---------------|
| • Whole Grain   | • Organic    | • Smart Sugar |
| • Heart Healthy | • 100% Juice | • Low Sodium  |

Happy “Back to School!”



## REFERENCES

1. International Food Information Council Foundation. Breakfast and Health.

<http://www.foodinsight.org/Content/6/IFIC%20Brkfast%20Review%20FINAL.pdf>

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