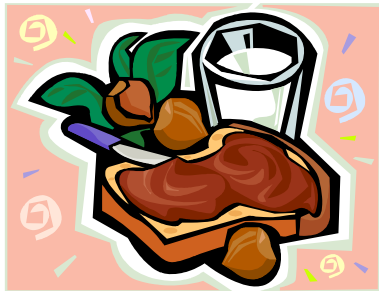


***Let's Get Revvin' in 2007:
Jump-start your day the breakfast way!***

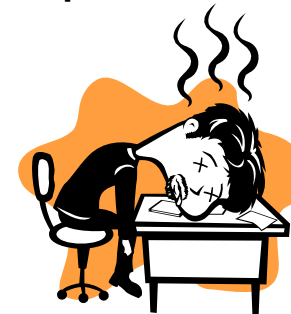
***Ready? Set?
Go!***

Let's start each day the breakfast way!

Did you know breakfast is the most important meal of the day? Unfortunately it is often the most neglected meal in America. After 8 to 12 hours of sleep, the body needs to “break the fast” and fuel up with nutrition. What happens if there is no fuel for the body? The body must rely on nutrients from last night’s dinner or evening snack! This is especially hard on children’s bodies since they have small stomachs and cannot eat enough at one time to keep them going for that many hours.



Not only is breakfast important physically, it helps the body perform better mentally, too. Just think of breakfast as “brain fuel”. Without “brain fuel” breakfast-skippers have trouble concentrating, whereas children who begin their day with “brain fuel” have a longer attention span.



Sadly, children who skip breakfast are more likely to be overweight! When children get revved up with a healthy breakfast, they are more likely to make healthier food choices throughout the day. Additionally, skipping breakfast has no advantage in losing weight. It only results in hunger and may cause over-eating throughout the day to make up for what nutrition was missed in the morning.



“What makes for a good breakfast?”

The best morning meal provides one fourth of the days’ calorie and protein needs. A menu following the CACFP requirements consisting of milk, fruit/vegetable and a bread/bread alternate provides those nutritional needs. Let’s look at each food group to see how each one contributes to “breaking the fast”.



Milk

Why milk? Why not! This beverage provides more nutrients than many other beverages, including calcium, vitamins A and D, protein, and carbohydrates. In fact, milk is a natural nutrient powerhouse!¹

¹http://www.whymilk.com/facts_gotmilk.htm

Calcium helps build and maintain strong teeth and bones. It also plays a vital role in nerve function, muscle contraction and blood clotting.

Vitamin A maintains normal vision and bone growth. It helps regulate cell growth and helps regulate the immune system. Vitamin A also helps the skin and mucous membranes.

Vitamin D promotes the absorption of calcium which helps form and maintain strong bones.

Protein plays a key role in a number of bodily functions. Protein is vital to brain development and cell growth, repair and maintenance. Also, protein provides a source of energy.

Carbohydrates are the primary source for energy for all body functions.² Milk contains simple carbohydrates, which are also known as simple sugars. These sugars are quickly broken down and digested speedily.

²<http://www.kidshealth.org>



Fruits and Vegetables

Have you ever eaten a rainbow at breakfast? Color the breakfast plate with fruit or veggies! This food group has many nutrients to offer, like Vitamins A and C, dietary fiber, iron, and complex carbohydrates.

Vitamin A is found mostly in deep green leafy vegetables and orange fruits and vegetables. Good sources of vitamin A are apricots, tomato juice, carrots, peaches, plums, spinach, squash, broccoli and sweet potatoes.

Vitamin C helps keep gums healthy, and aids in healing wounds and cuts. Vitamin C also helps absorb iron from other foods. Great sources of this vitamin are citrus fruits, melons, mango, papaya and berries.

Dietary fiber helps the body stay regulated. Fiber is the edible part of the plant that cannot be digested (peels, skins, seeds). There are

two kinds of fiber: *soluble* and *insoluble*. Soluble fiber partially dissolves in water and slows digestion, which helps the body feel full. Good sources of soluble fiber are found in fruits. Insoluble fiber does not dissolve in water and passes through the digestive tract largely intact, absorbing water like a sponge. This helps create larger, softer stools and speeds waste through the large intestine. Unpeeled fruits and vegetables are great sources of insoluble fiber, which means fresh fruits and veggies are a much better choice for dietary fiber than juice.

Iron helps carry oxygen to the blood and is essential for cell growth. Berries, dried fruits (dates, peaches, apricots and raisins), figs, plums and prunes are fruit sources containing iron. The best veggie sources are spinach, lentils, kidney, lima and navy beans and black-eyed peas.

Carbohydrates from plant sources are called complex carbohydrates. These energy sources take longer to digest, which helps also help make the body feel full. Vegetables and fruits are excellent sources of complex carbs.



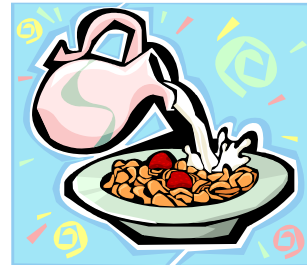
Bread and Bread Alternates

Remember “The Little Red Hen”? She sure must have known bread is a valuable source of nutrition! This food group of enriched and whole grains are loaded with protein, iron, dietary fiber, carbohydrates, and vitamins. But exactly what is the difference between enriched and whole grain?

Enriched means nutrients are added back into a refined grain product. Through the milling process parts of the grain are removed. Many of the essential nutrients are lost during this process.³ The product is later enriched with some of the nutrients, but not all. Food manufacturers process grains this way to create longer-lasting and shelf-stable food product. Most of these foods are white, bland tasting and stripped of fiber.

³<http://life.familyeducation.com/foods/nutrition-and-diet/44290.html>

Whole grain includes the entire edible part of the grain. It is the more wholesome and nutritious than refined grains. Whole grains include corn, oats, rice and wheat. Today, many cereals are being made from whole grains rather than refined grains. Hooray!



“What are the best kinds of ready-to-eat cereals?”

Navigating the cereal aisles at the grocery store can be overwhelming. There are boxes with pictures of animals, cartoons, pirates, celebrities and feature kid-friendly names. But look past all the glitz and glamour to pick out the most nutritious cereal. Avoid the cartoon characters and wacky box designs. Most of these cereals are high in sugar. Finally, read the “Nutrition Facts” and ingredient labels on the back or side of the package and ignore the “hard-sell” on the front of the box. Look for whole grain, protein, iron, vitamins, dietary fiber and low sugar content (3-6 grams per serving).



“Is cold pizza or spaghetti a good breakfast choice?”

Cold pizza and other non-traditional breakfast foods are great alternatives for the morning meal, as long as the meal pattern guidelines are being met. After all, variety is the key to good nutrition. Here are some ideas for other non-traditional breakfast foods:

**Salad
Bean Soup
Quesadillas
Milkshakes
Sandwiches
Raw veggies with dip**

Another fun way to dish up breakfast is by serving traditional favorites in a different way, too. Instead of milk, pour juice on cereal. Mix various cereals together and create your own kind of cereal. Use cookie cutters to cut shapes from toast. Make a waffle sandwich. Look through the recipes in this calendar for some ideas, too. Let your imagination soar and make the morning meals fun!



“Any other breakfast ideas to get the children revving?”

Jump start children’s self-esteem by allowing them to help prepare the breakfast menu. Encourage their involvement in the food preparation, too. The youngest child can rinse fruits and vegetables or set the table. Older children can read recipes aloud, butter toast or cut up fruits or vegetables (with close supervision). Review and practice safe food handling, too.

Secondly, rev up the day with storybooks. Stories can get the children excited for the day’s nutritious breakfast. Look for storybook ideas in your calendar.

Lastly, laugh the morning away with funny food riddles. Laughter may even make eating oatmeal fun! Use the riddles in the calendar or have the children make up their own.

***So start your engines and get revvin’!
Jump-start your day the breakfast way!
Vrrrooom!***