

# 5 Important Reasons Your Child Should Eat Breakfast

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What if parents could give their children a magic pill in the morning to make them healthy, smart and well-behaved? This pill would undoubtedly be flying off the shelf of the local pharmacy. While there is no such medication, there is something just as powerful: breakfast. Consumption of this morning meal is one of the most important things a child does all day. Over 30 years of credible research has proven that a [healthy breakfast](#) positively impacts brain function and energy level, which is extremely important for school-aged children.

## Benefits of breakfast

The following are key reasons why breakfast should be made a priority for every child:

### Breakfast equals better behavior

Children who skip breakfast are more tired, irritable, or restless by late morning. These symptoms lead to aggressive behavior that causes children to get in trouble in school. Children who regularly eat a morning meal have more energy, are less likely to exhibit aggressive behavior, and have a better attitude toward school.

### Breakfast leads to higher test scores

A study published in 1998 in the *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* showed significantly higher math test scores after children ate breakfast. This and other research has clearly shown that children who consistently eat breakfast test higher in most academic areas. (See also [Brain Food for Kids](#).)

### Eating breakfast led to better class attendance

Children who eat breakfast are absent from school fewer days. They also spend less time in the nurse's office complaining of stomach pains. Ironic as it may be, children who claim they don't eat breakfast due to a lack of time in the morning are tardy more often than those who take time for a morning meal.

### More nutritious intake by eating breakfast

Breakfast eaters generally meet [vitamin](#) and mineral requirements for prevention of deficiencies. They consume more [fiber](#), [vitamin C](#), [calcium](#) and [folic acid](#).

Unfortunately, children who miss breakfast do not make up for lost nutrients later in the day.

### Eating breakfast helps weight control

Eating breakfast helps to establish a normal eating pattern. Eating regular meals and snacks is a key to maintaining a healthy weight throughout life. Increasing [childhood obesity](#) is in part attributed to the disappearance of normal eating patterns in many of today's households.

### Why do some children still resist breakfast?

Given the abundance of compelling information on the benefits of breakfast consumption, why does one out of eight school children start the day without eating breakfast? Some are not encouraged to do so by their parents, while others make arguments for avoiding breakfast. Some common arguments are lack of time, absence of hunger, and distaste for [breakfast foods](#). No matter what the barrier, parents can and should find a way around them.

## **Creating healthy habits in your children**

Here are some tips for parents on incorporating breakfast into their children's before-school routines:

- Prepare for school the night before by preparing the next day's clothes, lunch and backpack.
- Set the alarm for 15 minutes earlier to allow more time for breakfast.
- Say no to TV, video games and computers in the morning.
- Choose foods that require little preparation such as fresh and canned fruits, milk, yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese, hard-boiled eggs, whole grain cereals or [instant oatmeal](#).
- Eat on the run with celery stuffed with peanut butter or cream cheese, dried fruits, string cheese, juice boxes, milk cartons, or [breakfast bars](#).
- For those with little hunger in the morning, offer juice, milk or a fruit smoothie made with skim milk and fruit.
- For those who dislike breakfast foods, offer something non-traditional like cold pizza or leftover chicken.

## **Set a good example to your children: eat breakfast yourself**

Children imitate the behavior of adults, so if they don't see their parents eating breakfast, they are likely to resist themselves. Children are not only more likely to eat breakfast themselves if they see their parents eating breakfast each morning, they are also more likely to develop healthier eating habits overall. Parents can encourage their children to eat breakfast by having them help plan the week's breakfast menu and making breakfast food readily available by storing them in low cabinets and having fresh fruit on the counter.