

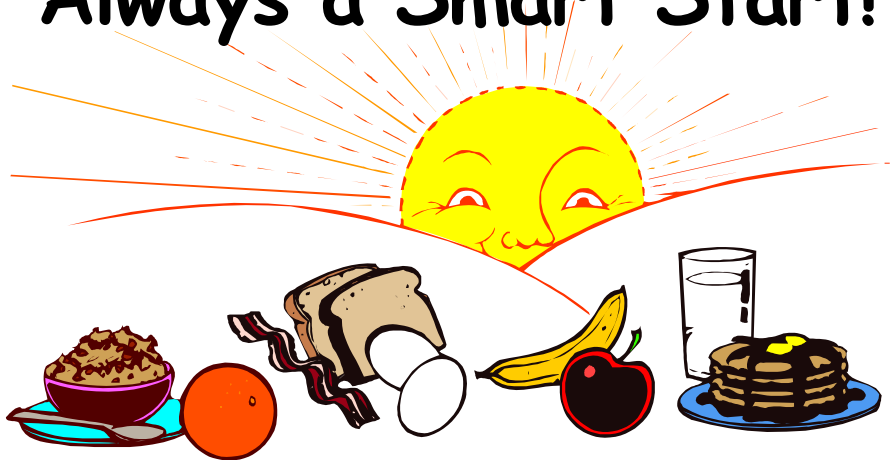


Healthy Kids

LSU AgCenter Nutrition Programs Newsletter

March 2005

Breakfast: Always a Smart Start!



Did you know that children are at risk for developing poor eating habits that may contribute to childhood obesity?

Almost one in three Louisiana school-aged children is overweight. Obese children are likely to become obese adults, and they are at greater health risk than those who are not overweight or obese.

Did you know that childhood obesity has doubled in the past 20 years and is epidemic in Louisiana?

Research shows that children who eat breakfast do better in school and don't get tired so easily. This is also true for adults. A healthy breakfast gives you the energy you need to get through the morning without being hungry or tired. With the rush to get to school and work, some things may be sacrificed. Often we do without breakfast. If you plan for your kids to have breakfast at home, join them. You need breakfast, too.

Children need enough food to grow, but too many calories and too little physical activity lead to overweight. Many teen-age girls skip breakfast because they want to lose weight. It is critical to talk to your children about what "healthy weight" is and how they can keep a healthy weight without starving.

Eating breakfast is the best way to start a day, so never skip breakfast. Common breakfast foods are ready-to-eat cereal, milk, bagels, french toast, eggs and bacon. Not all these choices are healthy choices if eaten every day. The key is variety and portion control. A healthy breakfast should be high in fiber, carbohydrates, vitamin C and calcium. These tips may help you add breakfast to your daily activity list:

- If you plan for your kids to have breakfast at home, have them wake up early enough so they won't have to rush through breakfast. Offer a few healthy choices and let them decide. This will make them more willing to eat. If there is really no time to sit down and eat, pack the breakfast and let them eat on their way to school. Healthy choices include: low-fat yogurt, granola bar, bagel with low-fat cream cheese, orange juice.
- If your kids eat breakfast at school, make sure you know what is offered and get feedback about what they really eat. To get the necessary nutrients every day, they will have to balance other meals with the school breakfast. You cannot control what your children eat at school. Never tell your child, "You can't have this or that." Instead, talk to them and explain why it is important for them to eat a balanced diet.

For kids only:

Take time to wake up your brain!

Did you know that kids who eat breakfast do better in school? Breakfast feeds both your body and your mind. If you are too busy to eat a healthy breakfast, try one of these ideas:

- ★ Eat breakfast at school.
- ★ Get up 15 minutes earlier.
- ★ Pack your breakfast in a bag and eat it on the bus.

Remember, mornings should always begin with breakfast!

Resource: *Feeding Kids* newsletter, by Connie Evers, Issue 23, March/April 1999

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