The Importance of Eating Breakfast

Eating breakfast is the most important meal of the day! A healthy breakfast is essential to fuel your child’s brain. Glucose is the primary source of energy for your brain and central nervous system. Overnight, your body uses stored glucose and by morning the body is fasting. This can impair your concentration, focus, memory, and mood. Eating breakfast replenishes this glucose and provides children the fuel they need to maintain their energy throughout the morning. Studies have shown that children who eat breakfast tend to perform better on tests, are able to concentrate better, are more alert, and miss fewer days of school. Students who do not eat breakfast tend to get sleepy at school and have a hard time paying attention.

Health offices at school see students regularly who do not eat breakfast and then have complaints of headaches and stomach aches. Some students complain of fatigue and dizziness. Other children report anxiety, bowel issues, mood changes, chills, or just general malaise.

Most often the reason children say they do not eat is because they don’t have time in the morning. Breakfast gives you a chance to start each day with a healthy and nutritious meal. Choosing breakfast foods for your child that are rich in whole grains, fiber, and protein while low in added sugar will boost children's attention span, concentration, and memory. These are all essential to have a productive school day!

Ideas for healthy breakfast options include: - Cooked oatmeal topped with nuts or fruit - A whole wheat pita or tortilla stuffed with egg, spinach/vegetable, salsa, and low fat cheese - A smoothie of fruit and yogurt - A sandwich with lean meat, low fat cheese, lettuce, tomato, cucumber and/or sweet peppers (Breakfast does not have to be typical breakfast food!) – Cheese and whole grain crackers with fruit. – A low fat yogurt with granola and fresh fruit.

Try these tips for fitting in breakfast on a tight schedule (Pintrest has great ideas too!)

Cook ahead: Make breakfast the night before and just reheat as necessary in the morning.

Set the stage: Figure out what you'll eat for breakfast the night before and set out dry ingredients and any bowls, equipment or pans. They'll be ready for use in the morning.

Pack it up: Make a to-go breakfast the night before or meal prep on Sunday for the week. In the morning, you can grab it and go. Breakfast shakes or protein bars are good on the run.

Students are able to bring breakfast from home to eat in the cafeteria in the morning or they can utilize the breakfast service in the school cafeteria. Westbrook Public Schools offers breakfast at all 3 schools. Daisy Ingraham and Westbrook Middle offer breakfast in the morning starting 20 minutes prior to homeroom. At the Westbrook High School, they offer breakfast during morning break time around 9:25 am. Any student who qualifies for free or reduced lunch also qualifies for free or reduced breakfast. Students who are not on free or reduced lunch may purchase breakfast on their cafeteria account. The breakfast menus are located on the school website