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### **START IT OFF RIGHT WITH BREAKFAST**

Start your day off right by making breakfast a part of your morning routine. Breakfast, the most important meal of the day, is the one most often skipped by children and adolescents. Reasons cited are lack of time, lack of hunger, or dieting to lose weight. Girls are more likely to skip breakfast and prevalence increases with age.

The *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* analyzed 47 research studies examining the association of breakfast consumption with nutritional adequacy, body weight and academic performance in children and adolescents. The research found that breakfast eaters had more nutritious diets and higher intakes of fiber. Despite higher calorie intakes, breakfast eaters were less likely to be overweight. Eating breakfast may improve cognitive function related to memory, test grades and school attendance.

Time is an issue for everyone so make breakfast simple. Cereal is a favorite choice and the major source of nutrition in children's diets because of the added vitamins and minerals. Ideally, cereals should be whole grain and low sugar, like granola, raisin bran, shredded wheat, toasted oats and wheat flakes. Other quick and simple breakfast items are oatmeal made in the microwave (see recipe), frozen waffles or French toast put into the toaster, granola bars, yogurt and fresh fruit.

For children who just simply are not hungry and ready to eat in the morning consider offering non-traditional foods. Ask your child what they would like to eat which may surprise you. My son Alex loved carrots dipped in peanut butter as a child. The goal is to refuel the body so the brain can work. Try non-traditional items such as cold pizza, sandwiches and leftovers from the night before. Beverages supply easy to consume calories so make them readily available. Healthy choices are smoothies (see recipe), milk, calcium fortified orange juice, hot apple cider, and hot cocoa.

One option for families is to eat breakfast at school available in all Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) for only \$1.10 elementary and \$1.35 middle and high school. Reduced priced students pay 30 cents and students eligible for free meals pay nothing. All breakfast menus provide 25% daily nutritional requirements based on the age of the student.

Each day they offer one of these hot menu items - Canadian bacon and egg sandwich, sausage and egg biscuit, breakfast pizza, hot ham and cheese sandwich, French toast, or flapsticks. Cold menu items include cereal and yogurt, and all menus offer 100% fruit juice and milk. You can prepay for meals ahead of time by sending a check to the school cafeteria or logging on to [www.cafeprepay.com](http://www.cafeprepay.com).

The new FCPS Supervisor of Food Service and registered dietitian, Judith Gordon, RD, LDN, has added new foods to both breakfast and lunch menus. Judith explains, “We offer a new product called the BeneFit breakfast bar which is made with whole grains.” I sampled the product and they are delicious! Breakfast is available for all students - paid, free and reduced priced meals.

Judith is committed to offering menu choices that the students will both want and eat. This excites me because food cannot be nutritious unless it is appealing and eaten. She is expanding the school food service section of the FCPS website with nutrition education activities like crossword puzzles, coloring sheets and word finds. The menu has a new look, logo and slogan - Powering Up Strong Bodies and Minds, and has a monthly nutrition and fitness tip. To see the menus

<http://fcps.schoolwires.com/15291082384139377/site/default.asp?&152910725163030847Nav=&NodeID=660>

Judith wants parents to realize you can get breakfast school. “We all have tight busy mornings when eating breakfast just is not a possibility. Remember school food service can provide a nutritious meal to start your child’s day!”

### **SPEEDY EGG SANDWICH**

1 egg (for more protein, add 1 egg white)

Non-fat milk (less than 1 tablespoon)

Vegetable oil or spray

2 slices whole wheat bread (can use whole wheat bun, pita pocket or tortilla)

Slice of cheese (*optional*)

Salsa or ketchup (*optional*)

In a glass dish, rub or spray a small amount of vegetable oil. Crack egg into dish. Add splash of milk (less than 1 tablespoon). Scramble egg and milk together with fork or whisk. Microwave on power level 6 for about 2 minutes until cooked, stirring halfway through. While egg is cooking, toast whole wheat bread or bun. Place slice of cheese on toast to melt. Add cooked scrambled egg. Top with salsa or ketchup

### **BREAKFAST BANANA SPLIT**

1 small, ripe banana

1/2 cup fresh blueberries or other fresh fruit

1/2 cup nonfat or low-fat vanilla yogurt

1/2 cup low-sugar cereal (such as Cheerios, Wheaties, Grape Nuts or Bran Flakes)

Peel the banana and slice lengthwise (from tip to tip). Wash and cut the other fresh fruit into small pieces. Spoon the yogurt in a mound in the center of a cereal bowl. Sprinkle the cereal on top of the yogurt. Arrange the banana halves on either side of the yogurt. Sprinkle the top with the blueberries or other fruit.

### **RAISIN OATMEAL STRUDEL**

1/4 cup quick cooking oatmeal (such as Quaker Quick – 1-minute oats)

1 Tablespoon raisins

1 teaspoon brown sugar

1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

1/2 cup water

#### **Topping:**

2 Tablespoons skim milk

1 Tablespoon low-fat granola

Place the first four ingredients in a microwave safe bowl. Add the water (or replace the water with 1/2 cup milk). Microwave on high for 1 1/2 to 2 minutes. Stir. Top with skim milk and low-fat granola.

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