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AS CHILDREN HEAD BACK TO SCHOOL, ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS ENCOURAGES PARENTS TO FUEL KIDS RIGHT WITH A HEALTHY BREAKFAST

The back-to-school movement is in full swing. As parents scour stores for the year’s school supplies, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics encourages them to stock up on healthy breakfast foods, too. August is Kids Eat Right Month, the perfect time to emphasize how a healthy breakfast is crucial in providing children the nutrients and energy they need to succeed in school.

"Studies show that breakfast eaters tend to have higher school attendance, less tardiness and fewer hunger-induced stomachaches in the morning, which means fewer trips to the school nurse," says registered dietitian nutritionist and Academy Spokesperson Toby Smithson. "Their overall test scores are better, they concentrate better, solve problems more easily and have better muscle coordination. Children who eat breakfast are also less likely to be overweight and more likely to get enough calcium."

"For most people, time is the biggest obstacle to eating in the morning, but a healthy meal doesn’t need to take a lot of time to prepare," Smithson says. "Getting organized the night before, keeping meals simple and even taking breakfast to go are three easy steps parents can take to make sure breakfast is eaten every day."

Smithson offers quick, easy and balanced breakfast ideas for children:

- Cheese slices served on whole-grain toast
- Iron-fortified, whole-grain cereal with low-fat milk and banana slices
- Nut or sunflower butter spread on whole-grain toast or waffles or rolled inside a whole-wheat tortilla
- Fruit like peaches, strawberries or raisins in instant oatmeal made with low-fat milk
- Apple slices and low-fat yogurt topped with crumbled graham crackers
- Lean turkey on a toasted whole-wheat English muffin

"These options are all loaded with protein and carbohydrates, two important nutrients that help energize the body and keep stomachs full for longer," Smithson says.
"While some prepackaged foods may seem convenient, parents should be cautious, as many contain excess sugar and fat. Donuts, toaster pastries, pork bacon or sausage sandwiches, chips, fruit drinks and some cereals can be laden with extra calories and have little nutritional value. Read the nutrition label to find lower-fat items and the ingredients label for products that do not list sugar as one of the first ingredients," Smithson says.

"Most importantly, parents need to be positive role models: Eat breakfast yourselves," Smithson says. "If your children see you making excuses, they are likely to do the same. But if they see you making time to eat a healthy meal, they will follow your good example. Your whole family will be better off."

Visit www.KidsEatRight.org for a library of healthy breakfast ideas like the recipes featured here. The site is a reliable and user friendly resource for nutrition information, recipes, cooking videos and more to empower Kids to Eat Right!

**APPLE CINNAMON FRENCH TOAST**
*This version of French toast uses whole-wheat bread and fat-free milk for a healthier option.*

2 large eggs  
1/2 cup fat-free milk  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla  
1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon, or to taste  
6 slices whole-wheat bread  
Cooking spray  
Light pancake syrup or sliced fresh fruit (optional)

Thoroughly mix eggs, milk, vanilla and cinnamon. Dip both sides of the bread slices, one at a time, into egg mixture. Re dip if necessary, until all of the egg mixture is absorbed into the bread. Spray a nonstick skillet with cooking spray. Heat over medium heat. Place dipped bread slices on heated skillet. Cook 2 to 3 minutes per side or until both sides are golden brown. Drizzle with pancake syrup or top with sliced fresh fruit (optional). Serve warm.

**APPLE BAKED OATMEAL**
*A cross between a cake, cookie and a bowl of oatmeal, this make ahead treat is handy to heat up and have for a quick healthy breakfast or snack. You can add a touch more brown sugar if you like it sweeter and a splash of milk for more creaminess.*

1 1/2 cups fat-free milk or soymilk  
1/2 cup packed brown sugar  
1/2 cup egg substitute or egg whites  
1 tablespoon melted margarine  
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon  
2 cups rolled oats (not instant)  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 1/2 cups chopped apples
Preheat oven to 350°F. In a small bowl mix the milk, brown sugar, egg substitute/whites, margarine and cinnamon together. In a larger bowl combine the oats and the baking powder. Pour the wet mixture into the bowl with the oats, add the apples and mix well. Spoon the mixture into a 8 x 8 inch pan coated with cooking spray and bake for 30-40 minutes, until top is firm and a toothpick comes out clean in the center.

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