

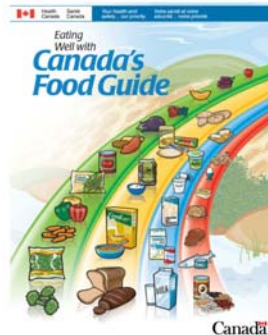
# Nutrition Matters

Nutrition Services, Community and Health Services

## Blast Off with Breakfast!

Does the thought of eating breakfast make you groan? About 30 per cent of Canadian adults and children skip breakfast on a regular basis — even though it's the most important meal of the day. After an overnight “fast”, we need breakfast to provide energy and nutrients for our mind and body.

A balanced breakfast includes food from at least three of the four food groups in *Canada's Food Guide*. This helps to ensure important vitamin and mineral needs are being met.



### Five important reasons to eat breakfast:

#### 1. It supplies your body with energy and nutrients

Eating a balanced breakfast can supply your body with important nutrients such as carbohydrates, protein, vitamin C, folate, iron, calcium, and fibre. These nutrients play a key role in promoting health including:

- Growth in children and during pregnancy
- Preventing health problems such as low blood iron, obesity, eating disorders, stress
- Preventing chronic disease such as Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, cancer, osteoporosis
- Energizing your body

#### 2. It improves performance

Research has shown that eating breakfast can improve memory, concentration, problem solving skills and overall physical and mental performance. For children, that means better performance on tests and classroom work.

#### 3. It makes it easier to get your fibre

Many breakfast foods such as whole-grain cereals, breads, high-fibre muffins and fruit are good sources of dietary fibre. When buying cereal, look at the label and choose one with at least four grams of fibre per 30 gram serving. Not only does fibre keep you regular, but it may help keep blood cholesterol and sugar levels within a healthy range.



#### 4. It helps maintain a healthy weight

Breakfast is important for maintaining a healthy body weight. If you skip breakfast, chances are you will feel hungry later on in the day. This may result in cravings for less nutritious snacks and/or overeating at lunch, which can lead to an overall higher intake of calories.

#### 5. It sets the stage for life-long healthy eating habits

Enjoying a variety of healthy breakfast foods helps children develop good eating habits they will carry through to adulthood.

## Healthy breakfast behaviours

- Eat breakfast everyday!
- Lead by example! The habits we form as children tend to stick with us into adulthood. When children observe healthy breakfast habits on a regular basis, they are likely to copy this behaviour. If possible, take time to eat a balanced breakfast together
- Turn the television off! Adults and children become distracted if they're eating while watching television and will not learn to recognize when they are full or hungry
- Some children and parents are not hungry when they wake up. You can always wait until your morning break to have your breakfast. Encourage your child to take something along to eat when they get to school. Check out the *Breakfast on the go* ideas on the next page

### Breakfast at home

Breakfast at home can be as easy as 1-2-3! Let your family create tasty combos or try one of these guaranteed-to-please ideas!

- Breakfast burritos with scrambled eggs and vegetables
- English muffin pizza with tomato sauce and low-fat mozzarella cheese
- Cereal (mix your favourites), sliced banana and milk
- Yogurt with granola and dried or fresh fruit
- Grilled ham and cheese sandwiches with vegetable juice
- Whole wheat pancakes with sliced peaches and vanilla yogurt
- Vegetable soup made with milk and whole grain crackers
- It doesn't have to be 'breakfast' food – try leftovers from the night before paired with a glass of milk or 100% fruit juice



### Lack of time – It's no excuse!

If you have limited time in the morning it doesn't mean a nutritious breakfast isn't possible. A healthy breakfast can be simple and quick; you can even try preparing breakfast the night before. Add low-fat milk or 100% juice as your beverage to these quick fixes:

- Crackers, low-fat cheese, orange wedges
- Instant oatmeal, banana
- Baby carrots, cheese stick, multigrain bagel
- Turkey and cheese sandwich
- Yogurt, apple, whole wheat toast
- Cold cereal, banana
- Tortilla with grated cheese and salsa
- Whole wheat pita spread with peanut butter and wrapped around a banana



## Breakfast on the go!

Busy families need 'grab and go' breakfasts. It's quick and easy to get all the benefits of breakfast even if you're eating in the car, at the bus stop or at your desk. Try one of these delicious combos tomorrow morning and the whole family will rise, shine AND save time!

- Yogurt, whole grain cereal bar and grapefruit juice
- Apple, whole grain roll and a hard-boiled egg
- Turkey sandwich, pear, milk
- Smoothie made with yogurt, fresh or frozen fruit, milk
- Slice of leftover pizza with orange juice
- Baggie of trail mix, carton of milk
- Banana, a piece of cheese, a mini-muffin
- Tortilla wrap with slices of turkey and low-fat cheese
- English muffin with hummus, banana, milk
- Bagel with a slice of low-fat cheese, apple juice
- Dry cereal, raisins and a cheese string



## Drink your breakfast!

Begin the day with a smoothie. It tastes great and is quick and easy to make. Each serving provides more than one serving of Milk and Alternatives, one serving of Vegetables and Fruit and one half serving of Meat and Alternatives, based on *Canada's Food Guide*.

### Smoothie

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 500 mL (2 cups)  | Milk, white or chocolate (2% MF* or less) |
| 250 mL (1 cup)   | Vanilla yogurt (2% MF* or less)           |
| 1                | Fresh or frozen banana, sliced            |
| 125 mL (1/2 cup) | Frozen berries                            |
| 30 mL (2 Tbsp)   | Slivered almonds                          |
|                  | *milk fat                                 |

1. Place all ingredients in a blender or food processor
2. Blend at high speed until smooth

Makes 2 servings

### Tips

- Keep a few bananas and berries in the freezer at all times
- For extra protein and calcium, add 60 mL (4 Tbsp) of skim milk powder
- You can substitute the milk with a fortified soy beverage
- Change it up! Try different frozen fruit like mango, kiwi, peach and pineapple
- For a frozen treat, pour into popsicle moulds and freeze

## Student Nutrition Programs

### Does your child's school have a student nutrition (breakfast snack) program?

Almost half of school-aged children in Canada may not be eating a balanced breakfast.



Nutrients missed at breakfast probably won't be made up for at other meals. Providing healthy breakfasts or snacks at school can help all students to do their best.

### What is a student nutrition program?

A well-designed student nutrition program is fully accessible (e.g., cost, and/or transportation schedules are not a barrier to participation). The program provides nutritious breakfasts or snacks based on the *Student Nutrition Program – Nutrition Guidelines* by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

#### Students miss breakfast for many reasons:

- Not enough time
- Working parents leave early and students are left to eat breakfast on their own
- Lack of positive role modeling (e.g., parents don't eat breakfast)
- Long bus rides — children are on the bus at such an early hour they do not feel hungry and may not feel like eating before leaving home
- To control weight

## Benefits of student nutrition programs

A student nutrition program benefits the whole school community:

### Students:

- Learn which foods make up healthy meals and snacks
- Enjoy healthy foods
- Avoid being hungry
- Learn to share and develop manners
- Learn to try new foods
- Gain energy and are ready to learn
- Have fun in a caring, clean and safe place

### Parents:

- Know their children are eating well
- Like the convenience
- Appreciate the affordability of the program
- Appreciate the opportunity for their children to learn social skills and healthy eating habits

### Schools:

- See the benefit of students who attend class ready and able to learn
- Enjoy the energy and spirit the programs bring to the school
- Like giving children the opportunity to practise the healthy eating knowledge and skills they learn in class

**For more information** about Student Nutrition Programs in York Region visit [www.foodforlearning.com](http://www.foodforlearning.com) or contact: Myssie Nunn at 905-868-9691 or [Myssie@rogers.com](mailto:Myssie@rogers.com)

