

Breakfast: The Best Way to Start the Day for Your Child

OSF HealthCare Newsroom

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By now, your family has settled into its school year morning routine. But does that routine including making sure your child has breakfast before heading out the door?

The American Academy of Pediatrics estimates that about ten percent of all school-aged kids skip breakfast. By the time they're teenagers that number climbs to 20 to 30 percent, with them often opting for more sleep time instead.

Making sure children have that morning meal is important. Numerous studies have shown that kids who eat breakfast do better in school, with better concentration and more energy.

Eating breakfast gets the day off to a good start – and your child's metabolism going.

SOT Shelby Miller, Pediatric Dietitian – University of Illinois College of Medicine

(Your metabolism like a motor in a car needs fuel to go. Your body needs fuel to move. I get a lot of parents who say my kid doesn't like breakfast foods. Totally okay if you can eat breakfast for dinner you can eat dinner foods for breakfast. If you have leftover spaghetti give them a small bowl. If they like fruits – fruit and yogurt those are really great options. This doesn't have to be what I consider that "Sunday" breakfast – like sausage and eggs and pancakes. It can be something small like a piece of string cheese and fruit or a cup of yogurt – even a glass of milk and a granola bar as you're walking out the door. :34)

V/O: Shelby Miller is a pediatric dietitian with the University of Illinois College of Medicine. She works with children and families as part of Healthy Kids University, focusing on weight management.

Miller says eating breakfast also helps a child keep their weight under control, since they won't be as hungry and likely to overeat later in the day.

Even a bowl of cereal – which can sometimes get a bad rap - is good way to start the day, as long as it's the right kind of cereal.

SOT Shelby Miller, Pediatric Dietitian – University of Illinois College of Medicine

(We want to make sure they're not full of sugar and they've got fiber. So fiber's the most important thing when we're picking a cereal, when you're looking at a food label look at dietary fiber – you want to have 3 grams or more. When you get something even if it says reduced fat or something's take out of it or new and improved – they're robbing Peter to pay Paul. They've taken something out but to make it taste good they've had to put more in. So when you're looking at those nutrition facts always keep an eye out on those sugars and those fats and the sodium as well as what the serving size is. :32)

V/O: Miller adds that everything in moderation is okay, so if your child wants to eat one of those sweeter cereals with super heroes once or twice a week, that's fine as long as they have a healthier choice the other days. She says even those healthier choices have come a long way from plain bran flakes, including things like chocolate Mini Wheats and Apple Cinnamon Cheerios.

For more information on healthy breakfast choices, visit [OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois](#).