



Back-to-School Breakfast Ideas

We often hear breakfast is the most important meal of the day. *But why?* Children who eat breakfast do better on tasks that require attention and higher-level brain functions. This means children who eat breakfast focus and concentrate better and have fewer behavior problems. They also have higher school attendance, fewer hunger-induced stomach aches, and better muscle coordination. Children who eat breakfast also tend to have an overall healthier diet.

It is easy to miss or forget breakfast during the rush to get out the door for school. But a little planning and prep will have your family fueled for whatever the day brings. Try one or more of these tips to help make breakfast part of a back-to-school routine that sets children up for success.

- **Prep the night before.** Set out breakfast options before going to bed. This will allow children and adults to easily get started eating or grab something for the road.
- **Set the alarm a few minutes earlier.** A few extra minutes in the morning can provide time for a quick breakfast. It can also provide time for children to wake up and feel hungry or ready to eat.
- **Role model breakfast.** Children copy adults' behavior. Sitting down to eat with children or at least eating while getting ready shows them breakfast is part of the start of the day.
- **Pack breakfast to go.** Breakfast does not have to be eaten at home. You can pack healthy options for the bus or car ride to school and work.
- **Try school breakfast.** Many schools serve nutritious breakfast. Ask your school and encourage children to take advantage of this.

Eating something is better than nothing. But to fuel the body and brain for a day of academic, social, and physical activity, the standout combination is a whole grain, some protein, and either fruit or vegetables. Find whole grains in things like hot or cold cereal, bread, tortillas, muffins, waffles, or even leftover rice or pasta. Look for protein, which is often missing from breakfast, in dairy products, eggs, nuts and seeds, beans, or animal meats.

Try one of these quick, easy ideas to fuel children's brains and behavior. Or create your own combination!

- **Hot, instant cereal.** Add protein by making it with milk instead of water. You can change up the flavor based on things you mix in. Want it sweet? Add fresh, dried, or even frozen fruit and nuts. Want it savory? Add cheese and an egg with veggies of your choice.
- **Yogurt bowl.** Start with a base of plain yogurt and then add fresh, canned, or frozen fruit and whole-grain cereal or granola.
- **Egg sandwich.** Have an egg your way with cheese and veggies of your choice on a whole-grain bread, bagel, English muffin, or pita.

- **Smoothie.** Blend milk, frozen fruit, and a banana. You can add yogurt or nut butter for more protein and flavor.
- **Tortilla roll.** Spread nut butter and your choice of fruit on a whole-grain tortilla. Roll up and enjoy.
- **Cheese and whole-grain crackers.** If you feel like snacking for breakfast, try veggies and hummus or fruit with whole-grain crackers and a stick or slice of cheese.
- **Dinner for breakfast.** Leftovers are another quick and easy option for breakfast.

For more ideas, visit your local Extension office or the [planeatmove.com/recipes](https://www.planeatmove.com/recipes) website.

Reference

Ellis, E. (2021, March 5). Power up with breakfast.

Eatright.org. <https://www.eatright.org/food/planning/meals-and-snacks/power-up-with-br...>

Ellis, E., Msora-Kasago, C., Derocha, G., Escobar, S., Bochi, R.A., Sheth, V. (2021, July 9). Breakfast: Key to growing healthy.

Eatright.org. <https://www.eatright.org/food/planning/meals-and-snacks/breakfast-key-to...>

Source: Courtney Luecking, Extension Specialist for Nutrition and Health

Copyright © 2024 for materials developed by University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension. This publication may be reproduced in portions or its entirety for educational or nonprofit purposes only. Permitted users shall give credit to the author(s) and include this copyright notice.

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, physical or mental disability or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. Reasonable accommodation of disability may be available with prior notice. Program information may be made available in languages other than English. University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating.