

Food & FUN

Tips for healthy eating and active play for preschoolers and their families.

February News

Start Your Day with Breakfast!

Growing evidence supports the notion that “breakfast is the most important meal of the day.” Eating breakfast starts the day with a healthy habit and with energy for the morning’s activities. A healthy breakfast helps children and adults meet their daily needs for important nutrients like iron, calcium, vitamin D, and fiber. And some studies link eating breakfast with healthier body weight and healthier eating habits overall. For more on the benefits of eating breakfast, visit www.kidshealth.org

For a healthy breakfast, mix and match foods from at least 3 of the 5 main food groups of MyPyramid: grains (especially high-fiber, low sugar whole grains), vegetables, fruits, fat free and low fat dairy, and lean meat/fish/beans/nuts/seeds. See below for ideas.



Quick and Easy Breakfast Ideas

Try these ideas, and create some of your own.

- Ready-to-eat whole grain cereal with fruit and fat free milk
- Spread nut or seed butter (such as peanut butter, almond butter, soynut butter, or sunflower seed butter) on whole grain toast; fruit; fat free milk
- Leftovers from dinner; 100% juice or fat free milk
- Low fat cheese melted on whole wheat flour tortilla or soft corn tortilla; 100% juice or low sodium vegetable juice
- Fruity whole grain pancakes or muffins (made ahead, frozen, and warmed in the microwave); fat free milk or low fat yogurt
- Smoothie (frozen or fresh fruit with fat free milk or yogurt); whole grain toast
- Brown rice cakes or whole wheat matzo topped with low fat cottage cheese or part skim ricotta cheese and chopped fruit (fresh or canned)
- Whole grain waffles, toasted and topped with fruited low fat yogurt
- Vegetable omelet; whole wheat mini bagel; calcium-fortified 100% juice
- Soft tortilla spread with nut butter and wrapped around a peeled banana



Indoor “Ice Skating”



Here’s a fun activity for friends and family age 3 years and up. All you need are two inexpensive, thin white *paper* plates per person, floor space with a smooth surface (such as low pile carpet, wood, linoleum or cement) and perhaps some music. Any type of music will do, but wintertime favorites or classical waltz music might best set the tone. To “ice skate,” simply put one foot on each plate and, keeping your feet pressed onto the plates, slide around as if ice skating (or roller skating). Try moving at different speeds and in different directions.

Breakfast Tips

- Keep your kitchen stocked with whole grain breads and cereals (cold and hot), low fat milk, and a variety of fruits.
- Post a handy list of your favorite quick breakfast ideas.
- Cook a large batch of hot cereal. Consider using a crockpot. Add fruit during cooking or when ready to eat. Store cooked cereal in an air-tight container in the fridge. Use within 4 days.
- Use weekends and less busy times to make a batch of pancakes or muffins; freeze them in zip-lock freezer bags. Defrost in the fridge and eat cold, or use the microwave to warm them.
- Do as much breakfast prep as you can the night before.



Young Chefs

Preschoolers can help choose the specific ingredients and the order in which they want to layer them. There are no set rules for this recipe!

Breakfast (or Snack) Parfait

- ½ cup fat free or low fat yogurt - plain, vanilla, or fruited
- ½ cup ready-to-eat whole grain cereal
- 1 to 2 tablespoons toasted wheat germ or chopped nuts (optional)
- ½ cup sliced or chopped fruit - fresh, unsweetened canned, or dried – such as sliced banana, chopped canned peaches, or chopped dried plums

Spoon half the yogurt into a tall plastic cup, preferably a clear cup so the layers are visible from the outside. Spoon half the cereal - and wheat germ or nuts, if using - over the yogurt. Spoon half the fruit over the cereal. Repeat the layers. Eat with a spoon. Cover and refrigerate leftovers for a snack.



Recipe of the Month

When made with soymilk, this version of baked oatmeal is great for those with egg and (cow's) milk allergies. Try using different fruits each time you make it. Rolled oats yield a chewy texture, while quick oats yield a smoother, creamier texture.

Baked Oatmeal

6-8 servings

Ingredients:

- 2-½ cups rolled oats or quick oats, uncooked
- 1-½ teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup unsweetened applesauce (or replace ½ cup with canned pumpkin)
- ¼ cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1-½ cups fat free or low fat milk (or plain soymilk), plus extra for at the table
- ½ cup raisins (or other dried fruit), optional

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly oil an 8 x 8-inch pan.
2. Mix dry ingredients through salt in a medium-large mixing bowl.
3. Whisk together applesauce, sugar, and extract in a medium bowl. Add milk and whisk again.
4. Pour liquid mixture into dry ingredients. Mix well. Stir in raisins, if using.
5. Bake, uncovered, in a preheated 350° F oven for 30 to 35 minutes or until center is set. Serve warm or cold with extra milk, if desired. Store leftovers tightly covered in the refrigerator. Use within 4 days.

Per serving (1/6th recipe made with fat free milk, no raisins): 200 calories, 2 g total fat (0 g saturated fat), 4 g fiber, 250 mg sodium