

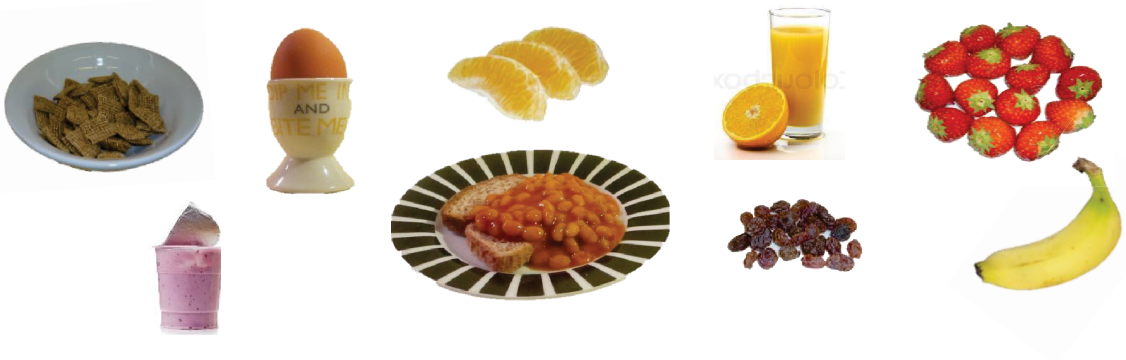
The West Midlands Active lifestyle and healthy Eating in School children study

HEALTHY BREAKFAST PARENT INFORMATION

What is a healthy breakfast?

Children should eat breakfast everyday to remain healthy and energetic. A healthy balanced breakfast helps children to concentrate at school, to keep up with school work, be physically active and play with their friends. A healthy breakfast includes plenty of fruit, fibre and limited amount of sugar and fat.

This handbook provides information about what is meant by a healthy breakfast and includes helpful advice on how to start the day in a healthy way.



What are benefits of consuming plenty of fibre?

WHAT IS DIETARY FIBRE? Fibre is essential for maintaining a healthy digestive system and is obtained from foods of plant origin. Fruit, dried fruits, vegetables, wholegrain products such as wholemeal breads and wholegrain cereals are good sources of fibre.

Fibre helps children and adults to feel fuller for longer as it slows food passing through the digestive system and slows the release of energy. This in turn can help to prevent too much weight gain as you are less likely to need to snack later.

Many high fibre foods are beneficial in other ways. For example, fruits are rich in vitamins and minerals which are essential for healthy development. They also contain antioxidants which help to clear our bodies of harmful toxins.

How much fruit a day should children have?

Breakfast is a great time to introduce fruit to the diet. Children should aim to have 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day. Two or three of these could be fruit. Examples of one adult's serving of fruit are:



1 medium
pear



1 handful of grapes



1 medium glass of orange
juice



1 medium apple



1 medium
banana

What kind of fruit juice counts as fruit portion?

Fruit juice is a drink which is produced by squeezing the juice from a fruit. When fruits are blended or squeezed to form juice, the fibrous structure of the fruits is broken down and all the natural sugars that our body would usually have to work to get to are released. This means that fruit juices are a risk to dental health and due to their low fibre content do not fill children up. For this reason, it is suggested that children and adults should only have one glass of fruit juice per day. It is better to eat the whole fruit to receive the maximum amount of fibre and nutritional benefits.

Fruit juice flavoured drinks (not pure fruit juice), mainly contain sugar, flavour, and water and do not count as a fruit portion. Examples of fruit juice drinks that do not count as a fruit portion include Fruit Shoot and Ribena.

Sugar:

Too much sugar can lead to weight gain and tooth decay. Foods that are high in sugar, such as sweets, jams and some cereals, are high in calories, but often offer nothing else to the child's diet and are therefore low in nutritional value.

Maximum amount of sugar

The maximum amount of sugar that children should have is 8 heaped teaspoon of sugar per day. A heaped teaspoon is approximately 6g. However, remember that many foods contain added sugars that we don't know about, therefore it is important to read the label. As a general rule, a food is considered high in sugar if it has more than 15g per 100g and low is less than 5g per 100g.

How to decrease sugar intake at breakfast?

You can:

- Offer low sugar cereals.
- Pay attention to the sugar content of cereal bars and spreads, try to provide low-sugar versions wherever possible.
- If your child drinks fruit juice at breakfast, try replacing it with whole fruits, and offer water or milk rather than juices.

Fat:

Fat provides energy, gives flavour and texture to foods, helps with absorption of some vitamins, and provides support for some organs. Although we need some fat in the diet,

consuming too much fat is bad for our health. High amounts of fat in the diet can increase the risk of obesity as well as the risk of getting several diseases later in life including diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, osteoporosis, and gum disease.

What is good and bad fat?

Unsaturated fat is sometimes called good fat. These fats contain Omega 3 and 6, which are essential for a variety of processes in the body including maintaining a healthy blood pressure and supporting the immune system. Unsaturated fats are found in fish, nuts and seeds, and some vegetable oils such as sunflower oil and flaxseed oil.

This is one of the reasons why oily fish, such as mackerel, salmon and sardines are an essential part of a healthy diet.

Saturated fat is sometimes called bad fat and is known to increase the risk of heart disease. Saturated fats mainly come from animal sources and are found in foods such as butter, ghee, and lard, fatty meats and processed meat products like sausages. Certain vegetable products such as coconut oil, cottonseed oil, palm oil, and kernel oil also contain high levels of saturated fat.

Like added sugars, hidden fat is found in many products such as confectionaries, ready-to-eat meals, and snacks. Check labels to find out fat content of foods. As a general rule, a food is considered high in fat if it has more than 20g per 100g and low in fat if it has less than 3g of fat per 100g.

How to decrease fat intake at breakfast?

You can:

- Replace full-fat milk with semi-skimmed milk.
- Provide low-fat dairy products like low-fat **natural** yoghurt and low-fat cheese.
- Avoid consuming croissants and pastries.
- Decrease use of butter, margarine, and chocolate spread.
- Limit sausages and fatty meat products to special occasions.

Ideas to make breakfast healthier:

Encourage children to try wholegrain, low sugar cereals at breakfast like porridge or Weetabix. However, if this proves difficult, start by trying to reduce the sugar content of their current cereal. You could try mixing two cereals, one high sugar and one low sugar to reduce the sugar content, for example – Coco Pops and Rice Krispies.

Serve cereals with semi-skimmed, 1% or skimmed milk to lower the fat content of the meal. There is no need for children who are growing normally to have whole milk after 2 years old.

If your child has toast or bread in the morning, try to encourage wholemeal or granary bread or bread products. There are breads on the market now, which offer a stepping stone between white bread and brown bread, for example “Best of Both”, these can help to increase the fibre content of breakfast without making a huge change. Try to use only a small amount of reduced-fat spread (e.g. margarine) or jam.

Fresh, frozen, tinned and dried fruit all count towards your child's 5 a day. Try adding or fresh fruit like banana or berries or dried fruit like raisins on top of cereal breakfast. You could try chopping your child's favourite fruit to a low-fat natural yogurt to make healthy breakfast option.

For more ideas on how to make breakfasts healthier, visit www.nhs.uk/Change4Life/Pages/breakfast-for-life

Breakfast ideas:

You can introduce a variety of breakfast dishes to keep children excited about their breakfast options. You can also ask children to think of healthy options and help you to make breakfast at the weekend:

English Muffin with Tomato and Cheese:

- 1 English Muffin (preferably wholemeal)
 - 1 teaspoon tomato puree
 - A sprinkle of grated cheese.
1. Cut the muffin in half and pop into the toaster.
 2. Once toasted, spread with the tomato puree and sprinkle with the cheese.
 3. Place until the grill until the cheese melts.
 4. Serve.

Omelette: This recipe is for a basic omelette however, you can add whatever ingredients that you want to an omelette, e.g. mushrooms, tomatoes, peppers, tuna, torn ham etc.

Experiment!

- 2 eggs
 - 1 teaspoon olive oil
 - A pinch of pepper (optional)
1. Add olive oil to the pan and heat. Spread the olive oil around the pan, ensuring it is well covered. Turn the heat down to a medium heat.
 2. Break the eggs into a bowl and mix together using a fork. Add a pinch of black pepper if desired.
 3. Add the egg mixture to the frying pan and spread all over.
 4. Move one of the sides and tilt the frying pan so that the uncooked egg fills the gap.
 5. Repeat on the other side.
 6. Cook for 2 minutes until the egg is cooked and fold in half.

The Egg and Spinach Sunflower:

- 1 egg
- 2 tablespoon of cooked and chopped spinach



- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Celery stalk/bread stick (optional)

1. Wash and chop spinach and cook for 10 to 15 minutes. You can prepare spinach in advance so you won't run out of time in the morning.
2. Heat the olive oil in the saucepan and add spinach and wait for 3 minutes. Add salt if necessary and stir well. Then make a hole in the middle of saucepan.
3. Wash and break the egg into the hole and put the lid of saucepan. Give 2 minutes to the sunflower to be cooked.
4. Put the sunflower on a plate and you can use celery stalk or bread stick to make perfect sunflower.
5. You could offer a piece of wholemeal bread alongside this meal.

Cooked lentils

Lentils are good sources of carbohydrate which helps children to feel fuller for longer. Lentils can be cooked in advance and re-heated in the morning. Some people like to have potatoes with lentils. You can chop a small new potato and add to lentils to cook for 15 minutes.

- ½ cup cooked brown lentils
 - 1 tablespoon olive oil
 - 1 tablespoon of lime or lemon juice
 - 1 small new potato (optional)
1. Cook the lentils in water for an hour. It may take longer depends on the type of lentils you use. Keep refrigerated and use in couple of days.
 2. Re-heat cooked lentils in the morning for 2 minutes.
 3. Pour olive oil and lemon juice to a bowl and add and mix lentils.
 4. You could offer some wholemeal toast alongside this meal.

**WAVES Study, Public Health Building,
University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT.**

Tel: [REDACTED]. **Fax:** [REDACTED]. **Email:** [REDACTED]

Some images included in this appendix are from iStock.com:

Two plastic yoghurt pots/Magone