


## Breakfast!



Our school year is well under way and School Health Services is excited to be a part of it. Our main goal in School Health Services is to alleviate or minimize each student's health issues so that he or she may focus on academic success. We value each student's unique needs and see each as an individual.

No one would really think of not making time for success, but when we skip breakfast, we are doing just that. Getting ready for school each day is more than just gathering needed supplies, such as notebooks, pencils, and textbooks. Breakfast is something that each student should have on his or her "must have for success" list.



 You may have heard it said before, but research has proven that breakfast is THE most important meal of the day. The body and mind of adolescent & teen students are at a stage of rapid growth & development, which further justifies the need for good nutrition, starting with breakfast. For example, you would not & could not drive your vehicle very far without gasoline. Nor would your cell phone work properly if the batteries were not adequately charged. Applying this same principal to health, how can our bodies and minds work efficiently and properly if we do not "fuel" our bodies first?

Needing a "good excuse" for skipping breakfast? Sorry there isn't any, according to [keepkidshealthy.com](http://keepkidshealthy.com). Here's proof:

- The State of Minnesota Breakfast Study showed that 'students who ate breakfasts before starting school had a general increase in math grades and reading scores, increased student attention, reduced nurse visits, and improved student behaviors'
- Children who eat a healthy breakfast 'meet their daily nutritional needs, keep their weight under control, have lower blood cholesterol levels, attend school more frequently, and make fewer trips to the school nurses office complaining of tummy aches.'
- Kids 'who eat breakfast are more likely than children who skip breakfast to consume foods with adequate levels of minerals, such as calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, and vitamins, such as riboflavin, vitamins A, C, and B12, and folate.'

If breakfast is so important, why is it that so many students are missing breakfast? Chances are, he or she is a sleepy-head and chooses to stay in bed until the last possible moment to rise & shine, get dressed, & get to



school before the bell rings. Beth Cecil, Registered Dietician at the HealthPark, offers some quick and easy options that your student can grab & go as he/she heads out the door:

- Yogurt (handy, portable versions include a yogurt drink or in a plastic sleeve)
- Granola Bar
- Trail Mix, Nuts, Raisins
- Nutrition Bars, (found in the Health Foods isle at the grocery), i.e. “Breakfast Bars, Protein Bars, Meal Bars”
- Peanut Butter on a bagel, toast, graham cracker, apple or banana
- Hard Boiled Egg
- Dry Cereal in a baggie
- String Cheese or Slice of Cheese
- Milk in a small carton
- Sandwich on Whole Grain Bread (Peanut Butter, Cheese, Ham, Turkey, etc). You can even make your sandwich ahead of time, store it in the refrigerator, then grab & go in the morning
- Pop-Tarts (quick, easy, & better than nothing)
- A Slice of Left-Over Pizza...yes, that’s right...Pizza. It is not ALL bad...it is a source of protein, has cheese & tomato sauce.
- Remember SOMETHING is better than NOTHING



However, if your child does eat something with a high-sugar content, such as a piece of fruit, a glass of juice, or sugar coated cereal, that he/she will need to eat a protein source with it (i.e. milk, peanut butter, nuts, cheese, egg), so the blood sugar does not rise too quickly, then bottom out within a few hours, causing a headache, feel weak, shaky, sweaty, apprehensive, and definitely not as mentally sharp as they could be. Some students may actually “pass out” from the effects of their low blood sugar. Starting around 10 a.m. daily, our Health Rooms encounter numerous students who have these symptoms of low blood sugar, all of which either had no or very little breakfast.

Remember, the key to academic success begins with breakfast, fueling the body & mind.

