



K-State Extension Connection

For more information,
contact: Barbara Ames
Family and Consumer Sciences Agent, Wildcat Extension District
bames@ksu.edu, (620) 331-2690

Kick-Start Your Day with Breakfast

Back-to-school means busy mornings getting everyone ready and out the door for school and work. Breakfast might be the last thing on your morning to-do list, but don't skip this important meal. Breakfast refuels your body, jump-starts your day and may even benefit your overall health.

Children who regularly eat a healthy breakfast are more likely to:

- Meet daily nutrient requirements.
- Be at a healthy body weight.
- Have better concentration and be more focused and alert.
- Have better problem-solving skills and better hand-eye coordination
- Miss fewer days of school.



What does a healthy breakfast look like?

- **Whole grains.** Examples include whole-grain rolls and bagels, hot or cold whole-grain cereals, whole-grain English muffins, and whole-grain waffles.
- **Lean protein.** Examples include eggs, lean meat, legumes, and nuts.
- **Low-fat dairy.** Examples include milk, plain or lower sugar yogurts, and low-fat cheeses.
- **Fruits and vegetables.** Examples include fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables, 100 percent juice without added sugar, and fruit and vegetable smoothies.

Together, these food groups provide complex carbohydrates, fiber, protein and a small amount of fat. This combination provides health benefits and helps you feel full for hours. Make choices that suit your tastes and preferences, and try to choose food from at least three of these food groups to round out a healthy breakfast.

If cereal is your go-to item for breakfast, remember...Not all cereals are created equal.

Read the Nutrition Facts label and ingredient list before choosing to buy a cereal, and be sure to compare the serving sizes. Look for cereals with at least 3 to 5 grams of fiber per serving, and avoid cereals that list sugar at or near the top of the ingredient list, or that have multiple types of added sugar such as high-fructose corn syrup, honey, brown sugar and dextrose.

Think out of the box for breakfast ideas.

If your children want leftover pizza for breakfast, let them have it. A traditional breakfast isn't necessary as long as it is nutritious and well balanced. The combinations are limited only by your creativity and imagination.

Try some of these ideas:

- Mash a banana into peanut butter and spread over whole wheat bread.
- Keep whole grain muffins in the freezer and warm them up in the microwave.
- Set the breakfast table the night before even if it's only for juice and cereal. You'll be surprised at how much time it will save you.
- Most kids love French toast, plus it is quick and easy. Make it with whole grain bread and add a little cinnamon to the egg batter for variety. It can even be made ahead, refrigerated, and warmed in the microwave in the morning.
- Use last night's left over chicken and make quesadillas or breakfast burritos in a matter of minutes. Wrap in a paper towel and they can be eaten on the bus or in the car on the way to school.
- An individual carton of Greek yogurt is always a fast choice. With the amount of protein in it, it will help tide you over until lunch. Pair it with fresh fruit and you have a portable breakfast.
- Most fruit can be just washed and eaten. No prep required, and it will add vitamins that your brain needs.
- Try cooked oatmeal topped with almonds and cranberries.
- Consider a smoothie of fruits, plain yogurt and a spoonful of wheat germ.

Breakfast is considered the most important meal of the day for a reason. Be sure to take advantage of the benefits of kick-starting your day with breakfast.

Find more information about these topics and others, by contacting the Wildcat Extension District offices at: Crawford County, 620-724-8233; Labette County, 620-784-5337; Montgomery County, 620-331-2690; Wilson County, 620-378-2167; Pittsburg Office, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP), 620-232-1930. Wildcat District Extension is on the Web at <http://www.wildcatdistrict.ksu.edu>. Or, like our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/wildcat.extension.district.

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