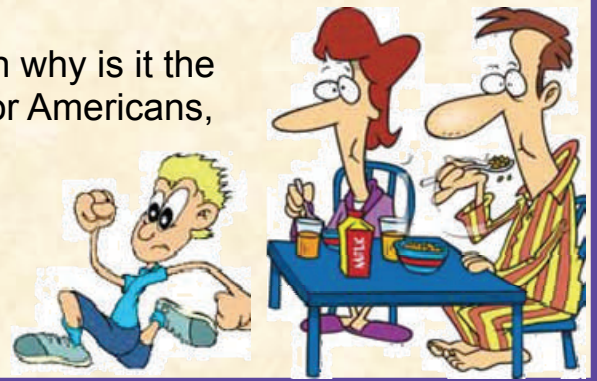


Don't Play Hooky from Breakfast

If breakfast is the most important meal of the day, then why is it the most skipped meal of the day? It's an age-old battle for Americans, with the majority of breakfast skippers being children. Between 42% and 59% of American children do not eat breakfast every day according to the [American Dietetic Association's \(ADA\)](#). Lets take a look at some facts that show how vital breakfast is for kids.



The Amazing Power of Breakfast!

- Research shows that [kids who eat breakfast](#) regularly tend to be more alert in school, and are therefore able to learn better
- Children who report eating breakfast on a regular basis tend to have better nutritional profiles than their breakfast skipping peers.
- Breakfast skipping among young people has been shown to be associated with an increased likelihood of being overweight or obese.
- Breakfast helps give kids strength and endurance to engage in physical activity.

Not all Breakfasts are Created Equally

Sugary foods such as Captain Crunch and toaster strudels have what is called a high glycemic index. The glycemic index is a measure of how quickly the carbohydrates in food are absorbed into our bodies and converted to fuel. When it comes to sustained brain power, food that is low on the index such as whole grains are preferable. Even though a bowl of sugary cereal and a bowl of old-fashioned oatmeal may have the same number of carbohydrates, they have very different glycemic loads. This is because oatmeal has a higher amount of fiber and releases the sugar slower providing energy to last through the morning without the sugar crashes!

No matter your age, for peak performance, don't play hooky from breakfast! Begin your mornings with foods that are high in fiber, add a source of protein, and include fruits and vegetables. Try some of these quick and nutritious [breakfast ideas](#).



The Science Behind it All!

After fasting all night, a developing body (and brain) needs a fresh supply of glucose (or blood sugar). That's the brain's basic fuel. Without glucose our brains simply do not

operate well. Understanding new information both visually and spatially becomes difficult, causing kids not to remember things as well.

Breakfast also helps jump start your metabolism and thus, helps you burn more calories throughout the day. When you eat breakfast, you're telling your body there are plenty of calories to be had for the day. When you skip breakfast, the message your body receives says it needs to conserve rather than burn any incoming calories.

Eat Smart Program-Missoula City-County Health Department
 Questions or comments? Contact Rebecca Morley, MA
 (406)258-3827 www.co.missoula.mt.us/HealthServices/EatSmart
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