

# NETA Quarterly News

Nutrition, Physical Activity & Gardening for  
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## Why Having Breakfast Is Smart?

Many children do not have the opportunity to eat breakfast on a regular basis. Family and community life has changed, children are left to feed for themselves, and often their breakfasts are of poor nutritional value or skipped entirely. Children who arrive at school without breakfast may not have eaten the night before. Without breakfast these children are hungry, and hungry children cannot learn. These children may go hungry until lunchtime or snack on less nutritious food to stave off hunger pangs.

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Studies show that breakfast increases student attention, improves behavior, reduces trips to the nurse's office and improves test scores. Kids who skip breakfast rarely make up for the missed nutrients during the day, and they experience more discipline problems and less academic success than their breakfast-eating counterparts. But to reap the greatest benefits of breakfast, children must not only make the time to eat, but also make healthy food choices.

Many children benefit from participating in the School Breakfast Program. Particularly, children with limited resources may not be able to afford a healthy breakfast daily. School breakfast takes on special importance for these children. It is their first fuel for learning and growth. By participating in this program children are ready to learn, and they develop good, healthy eating habits. With obesity on the rise, eating a healthy breakfast will help students meet the required goals for fruits and vegetables. Parents, teachers, and administrators appreciate the positive effects on their students.

School Breakfast Program (SBP) is a federally sponsored program operating in more than 72,000 schools and institutions nationwide dating back to

## Inside this Issue

- Why Having Breakfast is Smart** 1
- What are the Benefits of Eating Breakfast** 2
- Simple, Easy to Make Breakfast** 3
- Stretch for Kids "Stretch and Reach for the Sky"** 4



the Child Nutrition Act of 1966. In Alameda County 184 public schools do not participate in the school breakfast program.

## References:

- [http://www.cfpa.net/breakfast\\_files/BreakfastandAPResearch.doc](http://www.cfpa.net/breakfast_files/BreakfastandAPResearch.doc)
- <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/cdic/cpns/research/download/appendix/Alameda.pdf>

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## What are the benefits of eating breakfast?

The American Dietetic Association reports that breakfast is the most important meal of the day.

Despite recommendations, breakfast consumption rates have been declining over the past four decades. According to the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey 2001-2002 (NAHANES) those who skip breakfast are the most vulnerable population: teens and young adults, African Americans, and low income families. Breakfast consumption has declined among US children and adolescents. From 1965 to 1991 breakfast consumption rates declined for preschoolers by 5%, children ages 8 to 10 years old by 9%, and adolescent boys and girls by 13% and 20% respectively. Adolescent girls in particular are high risk. Reasons commonly cited by children for skipping breakfast are lack of time, lack of hunger, and dieting to lose weight.

Breakfast helps start the day off right and should include carbohydrates for energy and protein to sustain

that energy. Optimal nutrient intake is required for adequate growth and development. Research comparing the nutritional status of children who eat breakfast with breakfast skippers has found that eating breakfast contributes to whole diet adequacy. Children who commonly eat breakfast have higher intakes of fiber and micronutrients. Children who habitually eat breakfast have higher daily intakes of vitamin A and C, calcium, iron, zinc, and riboflavin and they have lower serum cholesterol levels. Adequate calcium intake is particularly important among children and adolescents because their bones are still growing and adding calcium.

How does eating breakfast influence body weight maintenance? Research in this area is not yet conclusive, but eating breakfast is associated with a healthier body weight among children and adolescents. Research indicates that children and adolescents who skip breakfast have higher body mass index (BMI) compared to breakfast eaters. While consuming breakfast may increase caloric intake, overweight and obese children are more likely to skip breakfast compared to their normal and underweight peers. This habit might be the result of dieting and other disorder eating habits. Breakfast skippers are also less likely to engage in physical activities which might contribute to a positive energy balance.

Habitual breakfast consumption has also been shown to influence school performance. Breakfast consumption may improve school performance by alleviating hunger which has been associated with emotional, behavioral, and academic problems. The evidence



is substantial; consumption of breakfast improves cognitive performance, school attendance, academic performance, test achievement, psychosocial function, and mood.

Breakfast consumption has overall health benefits and aids in school performance. Parents play a critical role in the food choices their children make. Parents can plan and encourage healthy food choices from a variety of food groups. Eating breakfast is important, but **what** is eaten for breakfast is also crucial.

### References:

- National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Health E-Stats. Prevalence of Overweight among Children and Adolescents: United States, 1999-2002. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hestats/overwght99.htm>. Accessed February 22, 2008.
- Rampersaud et al. "Breakfast Habits, Nutritional Status, Body Weight, and Academic Performance in Children and Adolescents". *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. 2005 May;105(5):743-60
- Siega-Riz et al. "Trends in breakfast consumption for children in the united States from 1965 to 1991". *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* Apr;67(4):748S-756S



# Simple, Easy to Make Breakfast

## STRAWBERRY SMOOTHIE RECIPE

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup of sliced fresh strawberries
- 1 cup low fat lemon yogurt (8 ounces)
- 1 cup low fat milk
- 1 tsp sugar or use sugar substitute.

### PREPARATION:

Blend strawberries and sugar in blender until mashed; add yogurt and milk.

Blend just until foamy. Garnish with fresh strawberries, if desired. Serve immediately.

Makes 2 servings at 1 cup each.

### Nutrition Information per serving:

Calories 201, Carbohydrates 37.1 g, Dietary Fiber 0.8g Total Fat 1.4 g, Saturated Fat 1.4g, Trans Fat 0 g, Cholesterol 8.6 mg, Sodium 119 mg.



In March we celebrate both National Nutrition Month and National School Breakfast Week. Studies show that children who eat breakfast do better in school. With spring testing just around the corner, it is important that your child eats healthy and gets regular activity. Explore, taste and learn about eating more fruits and vegetables and being active every day.

## YOGURT ON THE GO

### Ingredients:

- 3/4 c. light fruit-flavored yogurt
- 1 tbsp. raisins
- 1 tbsp. sunflower seeds
- 1/3 c. strawberries

### Utensils:

- measuring cup
- measuring spoon

### Directions:

Mix all ingredients in a plastic cup. Makes 1 serving at 1 cup each.

### Nutrition Information per serving:

Calories 276, Carbohydrates 48 g, Dietary Fiber 2 g, Protein 10 g, Total fat 6 g, Cholesterol 7 g, Sodium 108 mg.



## CANTALOUPE SMOOTHIE

Try this delicious cantaloupe smoothie recipe,

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1/2 ripe cantaloupe, peeled, seeded, and cut into chunks
- 1 cup skim milk
- 1 cup vanilla fat-free yogurt
- 1 cup crushed ice
- 2 tablespoons sugar, or to taste

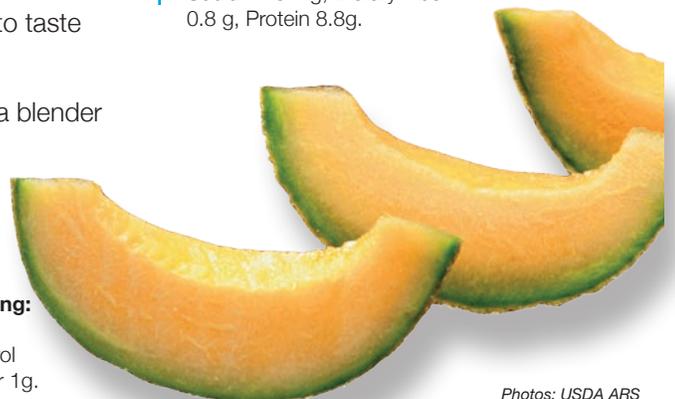
### PREPARATION:

Combine all ingredients in a blender and process until smooth.

Makes 4 servings at 1 cup each.

### Nutrition Information per serving:

Calories 88, Carbohydrates 17g, Protein 1g, Total fat 0g, Cholesterol 3mg, Sodium 60mg, Dietary Fiber 1g.



## OH SO DELICIOUS OATMEAL

### Ingredients:

- 1 c. water
- 1/2 c. rolled oats
- dash of salt
- 1/4 c. applesauce
- pinch of cinnamon
- 2 tsp. brown sugar

### Utensils:

- cooking pot
- measuring cups and spoons
- stove (You'll need help from your adult assistant.)
- mixing spoon
- serving bowl

### Directions:

Pour the water, oats, and salt into a medium-size pot on the stovetop.

Heat the mixture until it boils, then turn the heat to low.

Using a wooden spoon, stir in the applesauce and cinnamon.

Cook on low heat and continue to stir the mixture for 5 minutes.

Pour the oatmeal into a bowl and sprinkle the brown sugar on top.

Allow the oatmeal to cool for a minute before digging in.

Makes 2 servings at 1 cup each.

### Nutrition Information per serving:

Calories 102, Carbohydrates 20 g, Protein 3 g, Total fat 1g, Cholesterol 0 g, Sodium 79 mg, Dietary Fiber 0.8 g, Protein 8.8g.

## Stretching for Kids: “Stretch and Reach the Sky”

Stretching with your preschooler can be both easy and fun. Kids enjoy the opportunities to stretch daily. Stretching addresses body awareness, coordination, and balance. Children who are active and have breakfast have less difficulty sitting down and concentrating.

### SOME STRETCHING TECHNIQUES:

- **Touch your toes:** This is a basic preschool exercise that can be a lot of fun and increasing flexibility in the entire backside of the body.
- **Sit and stretch:** Sit with legs together straight in front of you. Walk fingers down to touch your toes. Ask your preschooler to give each knee a kiss, and then open up the legs wide and stretch down one leg at a time.
- **Butterfly knees:** Sit with the soles of your feet together, knees opened to the sides. Clasp your hands around your feet holding them together as you flap legs gently, knees rising and falling like the wings of a butterfly.
- **Roll head** gently by tilting head to one side touching your ear to your shoulder, then roll chin to chest looking down, then to the other side.
- **Shrug shoulders** for a fun and silly stretch. First relax the shoulders, and then shrug them up to your ears and shrug back down to starting position.



Wake Up your preschooler every morning with FUN stretches. You're sure to see great results.



Funded by the USDA's Food Stamp Program through the *Network for a Healthy California*. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer. The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious food for a better diet. For information on the Food Stamp Program, call 1-888-328-3483.

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