

School kids 'wagging' breakfast are missing healthy brain fuel

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The national MBF Healthwatch survey has revealed that a disturbing number of children 'wag' breakfast claiming there is 'no time' to eat, they are 'too tired' or 'can't be bothered' having a meal before going to school.

The survey found that 22% of parents interviewed said their children skip [breakfast](#) on three to five school days of each week, and a further 20% skip [breakfast](#) on one or two school days.

The remaining 58% of parents said their school aged children always ate breakfast before school.

Bupa* Chief Medical Officer Dr Christine Bennett said, "It is disturbing to find that 42% of children are sent to school on one or more days on an empty stomach because it sends a clear message at an early age that breakfast isn't important.

"Wagging breakfast is the [healthy lifestyle](#) equivalent of driving your car on an empty petrol tank - it inevitably runs out when you most need it.

"Research shows that skipping breakfast results in reduced learning, reduced attention and poor [food choices](#) for the rest of the day. Children who skip breakfast are more likely to be overweight which in the long term can lead to the development of chronic health issues.

"Children who miss out on breakfast are also less likely to get the recommended intake of dairy, [fruit](#) and [vegetables](#)," she said.

Asked why their children missed out on breakfast before school, just over half (51.6%) of parents said there was no time because of the pressures of being late for school or work or because of sleeping in.

"Parents should encourage their children to eat breakfast. Storing a few simple ingredients in the cupboard or fridge or organising breakfast the night before can help in the morning rush. Healthy shakes and cereal bars are great for eating on the way to school. Toast, [yoghurt](#) and fruit are also quick, easy options," Dr Bennett said.

Viewed nationally, the MBF Healthwatch survey showed that children missed breakfast at an average rate of 1.2 days a week - Tasmanian children were least likely to miss breakfast at 0.6 while Queensland and Western Australia had the worst record for breakfast 'wagging' at 1.4 and 1.5 days respectively.

"With many competing demands, we know that Australian families live in a 'time poor' society but the importance of making time for children to enjoy a healthy breakfast before going to school cannot be overstated," Dr Bennett said. "It can be the start of a lifetime of healthy eating habits," she said.

Source: Research Australia ([news](#) : [web](#))

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