

Healthy breakfast is essential for kids

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Expert shares tips for morning meals they can't pass up.

(HealthDay)—Kids who skip breakfast will be nutritionally short-changed all day, an expert says.

"Growing bodies and developing brains need regular, healthy meals," Carole Adler, a dietitian at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, said in an agency news release.

The morning meal doesn't have to include traditional breakfast foods. Give [children](#) foods they like, as long as you maintain a healthy balance, she said. For example, they might like leftovers from last night's dinner or a turkey sandwich to start their day.

If your child loves [sugary cereals](#), she suggested mixing a bit of that with a whole-grain, nutrient-rich healthier type of cereal.

"Nothing has to be off the table altogether, and sometimes just a taste of something your kids like is enough to keep them happy," Adler said.

Try to provide a breakfast that includes protein, fat and carbohydrates to keep children feeling full and able to focus until lunch. Protein choices include an egg, some nuts, a slice of deli meat or cheese, or a container of yogurt.

Don't let children skip breakfast, even if they have to eat it on the run, she added. For example, they can head out the door with a piece of fruit, a bag of nut-and-fruit trail mix, a whole wheat tortilla with [peanut butter](#) or almond butter, and a carton of milk.

"A fruit-filled shake with milk or yogurt takes only a couple of minutes to drink," Adler said.

If you're pressed for time in the morning, Adler recommended taking 10 minutes each night to prepare for [breakfast](#) the next day. You can chop up fruit to add to yogurt or cereal, cut up vegetables for an omelet, or mix muffin or whole-grain waffle batter and put it in the fridge.

Other preparations may include getting out a pan for pancakes or a blender for smoothies, and placing a bowl of nut-and-fruit trail mix on the table for your children to dip into before they walk out the door, Adler suggested.

More information: The American Academy of Pediatrics has more about [nutrition](#).

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