

Children who miss breakfast are less happy in life

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Children who frequently miss breakfast have lower life satisfaction than those who regularly eat a morning meal, according to a study of nearly

150,000 young people across the world.

[The research](#), published in the *BMC Nutrition Journal*, was led by Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) and Universidad de las Americas, and shows a nearly linear relationship between higher frequency of eating [breakfast](#) and greater [life satisfaction](#) in children and adolescents aged between 10 and 17 years old across 42 countries including Britain.

The highest life satisfaction score was identified in participants who had breakfast daily, whereas the lowest life satisfaction score was observed in children who never had breakfast.

Among the 42 countries studied, children who ate breakfast every day in Portugal had the highest levels of life satisfaction. In contrast, the lowest life satisfaction scores were found in children from Romania who never ate breakfast, indicating potential socio-economic factors also influencing the results.

Among children who ate breakfast every day, [children](#) in England had the fifth lowest mean life satisfaction scores, behind only Romania, Hungary, Germany and Austria.

Senior author Lee Smith, Professor of Public Health at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), said, "Our study was wide-ranging and found a consistent association between frequency of breakfast and life satisfaction, and there are several potential reasons for this. There have been previous studies that show low mood among adolescents who have not eaten breakfast and also higher instances of anxiety, stress and depression.

"Moreover, consuming an adequate breakfast provides the necessary energy and nutrients for optimal cognitive functioning and enhances concentration, memory, and learning ability.

"Another reason could be the mix of vitamins and minerals that we get from our daily breakfast, and not regularly getting those may result in lower life satisfaction over time. A regular routine that includes breakfast can also bring structure and a positive tone to the rest of the day.

"Results did show some inconsistencies between countries, which might be influenced by diverse cultures and lifestyles and socio-[economic factors](#). However, despite this, our results show that in all the countries examined, reported life satisfaction is overall higher in those who eat breakfast daily than in those who never eat breakfast."

More information: José Francisco López-Gil et al, Is the frequency of breakfast consumption associated with life satisfaction in children and adolescents? A cross-sectional study with 154,151 participants from 42 countries, *Nutrition Journal* (2024). [DOI: 10.1186/s12937-024-00979-5](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12937-024-00979-5)

Provided by Anglia Ruskin University

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