

# Breakfast

## Why is it important for children to have breakfast?

Breakfast helps get the day off to a good start by providing some of the energy and nutrients your child needs for good health, e.g. carbohydrates, fibre, B vitamins, calcium and iron.

Breakfast is a great opportunity to get at least one of your 5 A DAY.

Having breakfast, particularly one which includes protein, may help keep your child feeling full and less likely to snack on less healthy food.

Some studies suggest that having a healthy breakfast can help to improve cognitive function and academic performance in children and young people.

## What makes a healthy breakfast for your child?

Choose wholegrain breakfast cereals with no added sugar and other higher fibre varieties of starchy food, e.g. wholemeal bread and oats. Look for breakfast cereals that are lower in salt, sugars and saturated fat. Check the labels!

Include at least one portion of the recommended 5 A DAY, e.g. chopped banana, a handful of berries, grilled tomatoes or mushrooms.

You could choose to include dairy food such as milk, yogurt, cheese or calcium-fortified dairy alternatives such as soya drinks and soya yogurt. Choose lower fat and unsweetened options.

You could also include a source of protein such as eggs or beans.

To help start the day hydrated, always include a drink. Water and lower fat milk are good choices. 100% fruit juices and smoothies count towards one of the recommended 5 A DAY but should be limited to a combined maximum of 150ml per day.

## Practical tips for a healthier breakfast

A wholegrain lower sugar cereal with semi-skimmed milk and fruit sliced over the top is a tasty and healthy breakfast. Other healthier choices include porridge, low fat yogurt with fruit, scrambled eggs, nut butter on wholegrain toast, fresh juices or smoothies (150ml maximum per day) and fresh fruit salads.

Try not to give your child food such as pastries, sweet muffins and croissants too often as they tend to be high in energy (calories), sugar and saturated fat.

If having a cooked breakfast, poach and grill food rather than frying.