

Breakfast May Prevent Childhood Obesity

Study shows daily breakfast lowers BMI

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The advice we all got from our moms is true — [breakfast](#) really is the most important meal of the day, especially for kids.

Breakfast gives kids the [energy to start their day](#), and it improves learning and behavior as well. And now [new research](#) shows that it can also help keep them at a healthy weight.

“When your kids skip breakfast, they tend to be so hungry by snack or lunch time that they overeat,” says Cleveland Clinic registered dietitian Kate Patton.

Obesity linked with skipping breakfast

A new study followed 625 kids as they progressed from the fourth to sixth grades to find out how often they ate cereal in the morning. They were all children who lived in a low-income minority community, where American kids are at the greatest [risk of obesity](#).

Children who said they ate cereal every morning averaged in the 65th percentile for [Body Mass Index](#) (BMI), which is considered a healthy weight. Children who ate cereal only half the time ranked in the 95th percentile for BMI, putting them in the overweight category. They also had lower intakes of essential nutrients.

“This is a problem that only gets worse as kids get older,” says Ms. Patton. “The number of kids who eat breakfast declines with age, putting teens and pre-teens at a greater risk of obesity as they enter adulthood.”

Good breakfast ideas for kids

Cereals with more than 3g of fiber per serving



Sure, cereals are easy and quick in the mornings, but Ms. Patton warns that not all cereals are created equal.

“Look for cereals with whole grains and at least 3 grams of fiber per serving,” says Ms. Patton.

“Read the labels for sugar and salt content too, and pick ones with no more than 10 grams of sugar and no more than 140 milligrams of sodium per serving.”

Cereals with no more than 10g of sugar and 140 mg sodium per serving

Cereal	Sodium	Sugars
Frosted Mini-Wheats	0.0	7.0
Maypo	0.0	3.0
Puffed Rice	0.0	0.0
Puffed Wheat	0.0	0.0
Quaker Oatmeal	0.0	-1.0
Raisin Squares	0.0	6.0
Shredded Wheat	0.0	0.0
Shredded Wheat 'n'Bran	0.0	0.0
Shredded Wheat spoon si..	0.0	0.0
100% Natural Bran	15.0	8.0
Strawberry Fruit Wheats	15.0	5.0
Great Grains Pecan	75.0	4.0
Cream of Wheat (Quick)	80.0	0.0
100% Bran	130.0	6.0
Quaker Oat Squares	135.0	6.0
All-Bran with Extra Fiber	140.0	0.0
Clusters	140.0	7.0
Cracklin' Oat Bran	140.0	7.0
Crispy Wheat & Raisins	140.0	10.0
Grape Nuts Flakes	140.0	5.0
Raisin Nut Bran	140.0	8.0

Some other [ideas for a healthy breakfast](#):

- Fruit and yogurt (low-fat) parfaits topped with a whole grain cereal
- Whole grain waffles with fruit or [nut butter spreads](#)
- A breakfast burrito stuffed with egg, cheese, beans and salsa, or one made with peanut butter and banana
- Oatmeal with toppings like raisins, fruit (dried or fresh) or nuts

“Make sure your kids eat something every morning to start their day right and to help support a healthy weight,” Ms. Patton says.

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