



## **FAMIPED**

### **Familias, Pediatras y Adolescentes en la Red. Mejores padres, mejores hijos.**

#### **Breakfast: a very important meal.**

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If we want to begin our day full of energy and vitality, this must be done with a good breakfast. There are many and good reasons to do so and from this article, we intend to transmit them so that families can promote a healthy breakfast in day-to-day life. Hence, children would have it as a stable, healthy and, above all, pleasant habit.

We usually try not to start a trip without petrol, sportsmen usually have a dish of pasta before starting a competition or a training session and so, it is recommended to be provided with energy in a full breakfast to face our working or learning morning. At school, teachers usually notice that some children pay little attention in the first two hours. At this time, the most demanding activities are usually scheduled and light subjects tend to be taught at the end of schoolday. There is a close relationship between a proper breakfast and the ability to get concentrated in the first hours and all over schoolday. Even though they have a snack in the break, those two hours have already gone by and break must be for active games.

In some child schools, teachers, worried about diet, keep children sat down until they finish their morning snack instead of encouraging them to move and play. However, that break snack is not compulsory in children who have 4 meals a day. In fact, only 2-3 hours have gone by since breakfast and in 2-3 hours, they will have lunch. Thus, snack can be something very light but healthy as well: a small sandwich or some fruit can be enough with some water.

Human body has the ability to regulate approximately the amount of energy needed and that is better done if we “start with a good footing”. When breakfast is complete, moderately abundant and healthy, the rest of meals are usually more balanced. On the contrary, if there has been a bad breakfast, we are likely to eat with extreme anxiety when we get home. There is a strong association between the habit to skip breakfast and overweight. This means that those who do not have a healthy breakfast are prone to develop obesity (whatever their age is).

#### **Breakfast composition**

In each region, country or culture, there are different eating habits and breakfast is not an exception. Breakfast is regarded as balanced if the following food types are contained:

1. Dairy products, they contain proteins and calcium. It can be milk on its own, with coffee or cocoa, yoghurt or cheese. It is a matter of preferences, although for some people the election of fermented products is conditioned by being lactose intolerant, that can appear progressively after being two years old, with a non-fixed frequency depending on home country (25-30% in Europe, 70% in Africa and more than 90% in Asia)

2. Cereals. Their contribution, carbohydrates of slow digestion, supplies morning energy. It can be bread (toast or not) or cereal flakes. Biscuits, pastries and cakes also contain flour. They can be had sometimes but we should not forget that they contain fats and sugars. Regarding cereal flakes, it is to be pointed out that:

- \* “Breakfast” cereals usually contain honey or sugar and this increases calories contained too much.
- \* If they are labelled as “chocolated”, caloric value is excessive since they contain unhealthy fats.

On the opposite side, there are mashed whole cereals, as muesli, which are healthier because they have their whole skin (bran). A related aspect with bread and with this kind of cereal, is the importance of chewing hard good, appropriate to develop facial muscles and strengthen teeth.

3. Some fruit: fresh juice, pieces of pear, banana or melon, grapes, olives, dates, a couple of tomato slices on the toast... There are many possible variations. The intention is to provide vitamins and more vegetable fibre.

4. Other optional food which are usually in some people, families or cultures’ breakfast are:

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1. Sausage: ham, salami ...
2. Eggs.
3. Fats: olive oil, margarine, butter, foie gras.
4. Infusions.

Sometimes parents say that children lack time to have breakfast. They say it is a pity that they get up early, they wake them up with the right time to get dressed, drink a glass of milk and leave for school. It can happen that they are watching TV and breakfast gets cold on the table because a child pays more attention to the TV programme than to have breakfast and wake up.

However, fifteen minutes can be enough if a familiar breakfast is well organized. Children can collaborate: laying the table, carrying bread, preparing some juice ... if all have the same breakfast, a habit is created in children and the whole family is benefited by it.

### **REMEMBER THAT:**

- \* Breakfast provides you with food to face a whole morning of study, work and learning.
- \* A healthy breakfast must include fruit, dairy products and cereals.
- \* Good habits become consolidated in family situations and so, it is good to share breakfast with sons, as well as its preparation.
- \* It is good that television is off in meals.