

# Break the Fast: The Start to Good Health - Skills Supplement

## Summary

Eating a nutritious breakfast on a regular basis is important.

## Main Core Tie

Food And Nutrition

[Strand 6 Standard 1](#)

## Background for Teachers

Breakfast is a significant part of a healthy, balanced diet.

Why is breakfast so important?

The meaning of the word breakfast indicates one of the reasons that breakfast is so important - it breaks the fast. A fast is a period when one voluntarily goes without food. The most common time usually occurs during the night when one is sleeping. After long periods without food the mind and body function better if they are fed.

The relationship between fasting and nutrition is physiologically very complex. One of the ways in which the body responds to fasting is that of the metabolism process. Food is broken down to be used by the body. The body slows down and uses the energy provided by food in more efficient ways. This is sometimes referred to as the survival syndrome and may be one of the contributing factors to obesity. Skipping breakfast may also lead to over-eating at later meals. This is because the person will be hungrier and will tend to eat faster and larger portions to relieve the hunger and desire for food. When a person is very hungry it is easier to eat too much as well as to eat foods which are high in fat and sugar content. This is the case when it has been a long time since the last meal or snack. Water, or the lack of water, is also an important factor when it comes to the reason for hunger. Nutritionists now feel that it is more healthful and easier to maintain a normal weight if a person eats reasonable portions of food on a more frequent basis, with shorter periods of fasting, than to eat large meals which are spaced several hours apart. For this reason, the breakfast meal is more significant than ever. Additionally, breakfast eaters are more likely to meet daily recommendations for iron and calcium ("Healthy Living: Making the Grade--Tips for Feeding School-Age Children" [www.kraftfoods.com](http://www.kraftfoods.com)).

The body needs a consistent supply of nutrients to build and repair the body tissues which are constantly being damaged or used up by normal living. Protein is the essential nutrient that must be replenished to meet this need. Carbohydrates should be replenished to provide energy for activities. Breakfast can make an important contribution to the daily needs of the body, especially providing energy for the morning activities and work. To get enough nutrients and calories to start the day, try to make your breakfast at least 1/4 of the nutrients in the recommended daily allowance (RDA) or from MyPyramid.

Studies show that the brain needs breakfast, too. Children who eat breakfast perform better on standardized achievement tests, are tardy less often, have fewer behavioral problems and have more energy to focus their attention on school work (Office of Operations and Management Services, University of the State of New York Education Department, 2002 Annual Report. [www.oms.nysed.gov](http://www.oms.nysed.gov)).

Breakfast traditions differ in different cultures. In some cultures, it is usual to have a very light meal consisting of a hot beverage and a roll or bread and butter, while in others, a large meal consisting of several dishes, may be served. In general, countries which have colder climates customarily have larger breakfasts than the warmer countries because food supplies body warmth as well as provide

energy.

Breakfast food can be any food which a person likes and which can be prepared within the time limits which most people have in the mornings. Traditional breakfast foods in the United States usually include bread and cereal products, eggs, quickly prepared meats, and fruit or fruit juices. Any food can be eaten for breakfast. If a person dislikes the traditional choices, then non-traditional foods such as pizza or a sandwich may be preferred and can offer the same nutritional contributions as the usual breakfast foods. The important thing is to make a choice. It is difficult to meet the body's nutritional needs if breakfast is skipped.

### Instructional Procedures

#### LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

##### OPTION #1

Students will complete the [STUDENT BREAKFAST QUESTIONNAIRE](#) and discuss results as a group.

NOTE TO TEACHER: Options #2 and #3 combine well with any good dietary analysis computer program or online analysis tool.

##### OPTION #2

Using the foods listed from student's [HEALTH HABIT DIARY](#) from the previous assignments with MyPyramid, have students complete WEEK 1 of [BREAKFAST DIARY](#) worksheet.

Challenge students to concentrate on improving nutrition by eating better breakfasts during the coming week and complete WEEK 2 of the [BREAKFAST DIARY](#).

Discuss how students feel on the days when they eat breakfast vs. the days they do not eat breakfast.

##### OPTION #3

Using [A BALANCE FOR BREAKFAST](#) worksheet, analyze the traditional breakfast menus according to the recommended number of servings from MyPyramid. Remind students that at least 1/4 of the daily intake should be eaten at breakfast.

Have the students change these menus to include some non-traditional breakfast foods which would supply the same nutrients and recommended number of servings of the food groups. To illustrate, demonstrate waffles or muffins with added ingredients such as: strawberries, peaches, ham, bacon, etc. Discuss how combination foods are ways to get 1/4 of their daily intake.

##### OPTION #4

Students will complete a word search to [FIND THE BREAKFAST FOODS](#). This will help them become more familiar with the variety of traditional foods that can be eaten at breakfast time.

Brainstorm other foods (non-traditional) that could be eaten to help maintain a balanced diet and meet the daily recommendations of MyPyramid.

##### OPTION #5

Use [EATING ON-THE-RUN](#) as a resource for discussion, demonstrate or have labs on ways breakfast can be made a fast pleasurable way to start the day.

##### OPTION #6

To help students recognize that time and resource management can be road-blocks to good breakfasts, demonstrate or have the students plan and prepare a breakfast which can be eaten away from the kitchen or home. Appropriate recipes are included. (see [RECIPES FOR QUICK BREAKFASTS](#))

##### OPTION #7

Assemble a file of recipes for breakfast foods which can be prepared and served in a minimum amount of time. Use [BREAKFAST RECIPES](#) as a start.

##### OPTION #8

Have students plan and prepare two nutritious breakfasts. One breakfast should be built around

traditional breakfast foods such as bacon & eggs or cereal & milk. The other should be planned around foods not usually considered breakfast foods such as a breakfast sandwich and an unusual drink. Which do students prefer? Why?

Use evaluative tools [TRADITIONAL / NON-TRADITIONAL BREAKFAST](#) and [ANALYSIS OF BASIC NUTRIENTS IN BREAKFAST MENU. BREAKFAST RECIPES](#) may be a resource.

#### OPTION #9

Plan menus for breakfast which include the traditional breakfast foods. Change these menus to include some non-traditional breakfast foods from the same food groups according to MyPyramid. Use evaluative tools TRADITIONAL / NON-TRADITIONAL BREAKFAST and ANALYSIS OF BASIC NUTRIENTS IN BREAKFAST MENU. BREAKFAST RECIPES may be a resource.

#### OPTION #10

Plan and prepare a breakfast which can be completed in a minimum number of minutes--try 5 minutes or 10 minutes. (This could be a good place to use quick "mix".)

Use evaluative tools TRADITIONAL / NON-TRADITIONAL BREAKFAST and ANALYSIS OF BASIC NUTRIENTS IN BREAKFAST MENU. BREAKFAST RECIPES may be a resource.

#### OPTION #11

As a final project, prepare cards with the following breakfast menus pictured or written; print the directions for preparation on the back side. Give each unit a different menu. Have the students prepare the assigned menu and answer the questions on the evaluation sheet: [BREAKFAST EVALUATION](#) at the end of the lab and turn in before leaving class.

#### POSSIBLE BREAKFAST MENUS:

- Fruit bowl and bagel with cream cheese
- Bacon, eggs, toast, glass of orange juice
- Tuna fish sandwich
- Blender recipe (WAKE-UP SHAKE)
- Piece of pizza or snack pizza

NOTE TO TEACHER: Options 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 could:  
make good home assignments  
be good final evaluation activities

#### Bibliography

Any good Food and Nutrition text book.

Any good recipe book.

2002 Annual Report. Office of Operations and Management Services, University of the State of New York, State Education Department, Education Building, Albany, New York 12234.

[www.oms.nysed.gov](http://www.oms.nysed.gov).

"Healthy Living: Making the Grade--Tips for Feeding School-Age Children" [www.kraftfoods.com](http://www.kraftfoods.com) .

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