

For The Early Learning Centre Sector

Nutrition Fact Sheet

Why Does Breakfast Matter?

Summer 2026-2027

Breakfast is an important part of healthy eating for young children. A nutritious breakfast can provide energy for the day and a range of nutrients to support growth and development. In this factsheet, we explore why breakfast matters, what makes a healthy breakfast, and how to make breakfast part of a daily routine from an early age.

Key Messages

- Breakfast provides energy and nutrients to support children's growth, development and activity throughout the day.
- Offer a variety of nutritious foods at breakfast, including grain foods, protein foods, fruit and vegetables.
- Include iron-containing foods at breakfast and pair them with vitamin C-rich foods to help the body absorb iron.
- Make breakfast part of the daily routine and prepare ahead to allow enough time to eat.
- Involve children in choosing between nutritious breakfast options whenever possible.

The Importance of Breakfast

Breakfast is an important part of a healthy eating routine. For infants and young children, breakfast also provides an opportunity to offer a variety of nutritious foods that contribute to their daily nutritional needs and support healthy growth, development and activity throughout the day. Children who skip breakfast may become hungry later in the morning and be more likely to choose less nutritious snacks. Therefore, establishing a regular breakfast routine from an early age can support healthy eating habits and may help reduce the likelihood of being overweight and obese later in life.

What Makes a Healthy Breakfast?

A healthy breakfast can include a variety of nutritious foods from different food groups, such as:

- **Grain foods**: wholemeal or wholegrain bread, crumpet, iron-fortified breakfast cereals, or muesli.
- **Protein foods**: eggs, baked beans, yoghurt or cheese.
- **Fruit and vegetables**: berries, bananas, mandarins, tomatoes or cooked vegetables.





Iron Foods at Breakfast

Iron is important for children's healthy growth and development, particularly during infancy and the toddler years when iron needs are higher. Breakfast can be one opportunity to include iron-containing foods as part of a varied diet. Good sources include iron-fortified cereals (avoid cereals high in sugar such as Coco Pops® and Froot Loops®), egg, wholemeal and wholegrain breads. Pairing plant-based iron foods with vitamin C-rich fruits and vegetables can help the body absorb iron more efficiently, such as oranges, strawberries, kiwi fruit, tomatoes and capsicum.





How to Make Breakfast a Daily Habit?

- **Prepare ahead:** Prepare breakfast foods in advance and store them in the fridge or freezer to make mornings easier. For example, egg muffins, pancakes, overnight oats or cut fruit.
- **Get children involved:** Give children a choice between healthy options and involve them in preparing breakfast for the next day. For example, portion cereal into a bowl the night before and simply add milk in the morning.
- **Make it fun:** Use colourful plates, cups or utensils to make breakfast more appealing.
- **Allow enough time and minimise distractions:** Turn off the TV and put away electronic devices during breakfast to create a calm environment and give children enough time to eat without feeling rushed and being distracted.

Healthy Breakfast Ideas

- Porridge with fruit (suitable from 1+ years).
- Iron-fortified infant cereals (suitable from 6+ months).
- Weet-Bix Little Kids® with breast milk, formula or water (suitable from 8+ months when prepared to a lumpy texture, use cow's milk from 12+ months).
- Baked beans with wholemeal toast fingers (suitable from 1+ years).
- Pancakes with yoghurt (suitable from 1+ years).
- Scrambled eggs (suitable from 6+ months depending on texture).

Take Home Message

- Make breakfast a daily routine to establish healthy eating habits from an early age.
- Prepare breakfast ahead of time and involve children in choosing between healthy options whenever possible.
- Offer a variety of foods and allow enough time for children to enjoy breakfast without distractions.
- Pair iron-rich foods with vitamin C-rich foods to help the body absorb iron.

For more information, please visit:
The NSW Ministry of Health: Caring for Children
https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/heal/Publications/caring-for-children-manual.pdf
Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing: Get up & Grow - Healthy Eating and Physical Activity For Early Childhood
https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021/04/staff-and-carer-book-get-up-and-grow-staff-and-carer-book.pdf

Mini Meals
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