

Menu Suggestions & Best Practices

Breakfast Menu Basics

"Breakfast eaters are more likely to be calmer, less anxious, more focused and learn better. Breakfast also tends to organize children's day, particularly if they eat breakfast at school," according to Ronald E. Kleinman, M.D. chief of pediatric gastroenterology and nutrition at Boston's Massachusetts General Hospital and professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School.¹

A nutritious breakfast includes at least three of the five food groups, for example; fruit, whole-grain toast or cereal, and low-fat milk.

Some examples of healthy, easy-to-transport breakfast foods that do not require extensive preparation are:

- Low sugar cereals*
- Low-fat muffins
- Low-sugar granola bars
- Yogurt
- Fresh fruit
- Trail mix
- Low-fat cheese sticks
- Whole-wheat bagels with low-fat cream cheese or peanut butter
- Burritos or breakfast sandwiches with eggs and low-fat cheese
- Omelets or scrambles with low-fat cheese and vegetables
- Milk (unflavored low-fat or non-fat)



*Select cereals that are whole grain / high fiber and contain no more than 6gm of sugar per serving. Select grain products that are largely whole grain / high fiber. Look for products that have "whole" as the first word listed in the ingredients and contain approximately 5gm of fiber per serving. Some good cereal options are:

- Muesli
- Oat flakes/squares
- Oatmeal (unsweetened)
- Puffed wheat
- Raisin bran
- Shredded wheat
- Toasted o's (oat) cereals
- Wheat flakes



¹<http://www.nutritionexplorations.org/parents/expert/expert-april05-1.asp>

Menu & Service Practices for Classroom Breakfast

Classroom Breakfast menus can be simple and nutritious while still offering students a variety of foods. Many breakfast foods that are served in the cafeteria also work well in the classroom. Some proven practices are listed below.

Menu

- Easy-to-transport items (see above) are ideal for Classroom Breakfast.
- Serve fresh fruits that are not difficult for students to peel.
- Warm, hand-held items are easy for students to eat in the classroom.
- Avoid sticky items such as pancake syrup or sugary rolls that can result in messy desks and hands.
- Raisins, blueberries, grapes, and other such foods can have the tendency to roll underfoot and be squished. These foods, while very nutritious, may not be ideal for very young students eating in the classroom.

Preparation

Food services staff can begin preparing breakfast the afternoon before it is served.

- Non-perishable packaged goods can be counted and placed in crates in advance.
- Milk can be packed into insulated bags and stored in a refrigerator overnight before breakfast is served.
- The remaining prep work for breakfast can be completed in the morning before students arrive.

Many schools without kitchens receive pre-prepared hot foods from a satellite kitchen and use hot boxes or other warmers to keep the food at a safe temperature. Otherwise, these foods can be kept warm by transporting them directly to classrooms in insulated bags.

Clean Up

- For occasional spills, each classroom can be equipped with wet wipes, paper towels, a sponge, or other cleaning supplies.
- When cereal and milk is served, leftovers can be drained through a colander to prevent clogged drains in the classroom.
- Paper towels, wet wipes, or sponges are handy for cleaning occasional spills.
- Trash bins/bags used exclusively for breakfast are needed in every classroom.
- When students are finished eating, they are responsible for depositing their trash in the classroom's bin. Bins are moved outside of the classroom to be collected by custodial staff. Alternatively, student representatives from each classroom can dispose of full trash bags when returning uneaten leftovers and insulated containers to the cafeteria.
- Quickly removing breakfast-related waste from classrooms each day helps ensure that classrooms are kept clean and free of pests and odors.