



Breakfast

Are You a Winner or a Loser?

By Derek Pugh

We live in enlightened times. A scan of the work of nutritionists and neuroscientists tells us how the brain obtains and uses the chemicals it needs for healthy function and the overwhelming importance of breakfast. Not just any breakfast however, as it is clear eating some foods may be worse than not eating at all.

We are breaking our fast at breakfast time. Breakfast provides us with the fuel for the upcoming day. Without it we are relying on yesterday's leftovers, or breaking down body reserves.

At school evidence for the value of breakfast is high. There are winners and losers. It's simple:

- Breakfast winners have nutritious breakfasts,
- Breakfast losers skip breakfast or eat lots of sugar and the wrong type of fats.
- Breakfast winners are better students. They concentrate better and can manage more complex tasks.
- Breakfast losers get lower grades.
- Breakfast losers have an empty belly and are likely to crave junk food during the morning.
- Breakfast losers are often overweight and sluggish.
- Breakfast winners can make it to lunch time comfortably and are more likely to eat a nutritious lunch and less likely to overeat.
- Breakfast winners eat complex carbohydrates and proteins in roughly equal amounts in terms of energy. (Carbohydrates alone can make you drowsy).
- Breakfast winners often have high calcium levels in their breakfasts (eg through dairy products) and show better behaviour and learning.

- Breakfast winners may be calmed by the process of eating a good breakfast, thereby lowering cortisol and other stress hormones.
- Breakfast winners often have a better attitude towards schooling.
- Breakfast winners also get fiber, water and other important nutrients through their breakfasts.
- Breakfast winners are likely to have lower cholesterol levels and fewer days off school sick.

Further Reading:

There are many brain friendly recipes and information sheets on the internet. These are some I recommend:

1. <http://www.askdrsears.com> *Brainy Breakfasts, How Breakfast can Improve School and Work Performance.*
2. <http://www.npr.org> A Better Breakfast Can Boost a Child's Brainpower by Allison Aubrey
3. <http://www.heb.com> *Breakfast Boosts Brain Power*
4. <http://kidshealth.org> *Ready, Set, Breakfast!*