

## Breakfast: Serving up Success

How would you feel if you hadn't eaten for 12 hours? What about 18 hours? Would you be able to concentrate? Would it affect your mood? Many children face this challenge every day. A child who eats supper at 6pm then doesn't eat until noon the next day goes 18 hours without food! This makes learning, paying attention, getting along with others, and feeling motivated much more difficult.

Ellen White wrote, "Make your breakfast correspond more nearly to the heartiest meal of the day."<sup>1</sup> According to the American Dietetic Association, children who eat breakfast perform better in the classroom and on the playground, with better concentration, problem-solving skills, and eye-hand coordination.<sup>2</sup> Learning requires attention and focus which require blood glucose. Studies on young adults and children have found that when blood sugar is low, they have less attention and it affects their ability to remember what they learned.<sup>3</sup> They also have a harder time persisting on tasks than when they have glucose in their system.<sup>4</sup>

### HEALTHY BREAKFASTS

This doesn't mean we should feed children refined sugar (doughnuts, candy, energy drinks) for breakfast or throughout the morning. These sugary foods have little nutritional value and will provide energy for only a short time.

A healthy breakfast which includes fiber, protein, and carbohydrates will release glucose throughout the morning, helping students have the blood glucose they need to concentrate and to persist on tasks.<sup>5</sup> A healthy lunch is needed for the same reason - to provide energy all afternoon. Whole grains provide carbohydrates to the body over a longer period of time. Energy from protein will be available to the body after the carbs are used up. Fiber helps kids feel full and, along with water, helps keep food moving through the digestive system.<sup>6</sup>

Ellen White commented on nutrition when she wrote, "Children and youth should not be underfed in the least degree; they should have an abundance of healthful food. . . They should have the best of exercise and the best of food, for these have an important bearing upon the condition of the mental and moral powers."<sup>7</sup> Start today by including these nutritious foods in your family's breakfast:

- carbohydrates: whole-grain cereals, brown rice, whole-grain breads/muffins, fruits, vegetables
- protein: low-fat or nonfat dairy products, tofu, eggs, nuts and nut butters, seeds, and cooked dried beans
- fiber: whole-grain breads/waffles/cereals; brown rice, bran, and other grains; fruits, vegetables, beans, and nuts<sup>8</sup>

1. *Counsels on Diets and Foods* by Ellen White, [tinyurl.com/5wrfkdn](http://tinyurl.com/5wrfkdn)

2. *Healthy Eating & Diet*, [tinyurl.com/cer4d7](http://tinyurl.com/cer4d7)

3. *Blood glucose influences memory and attention in young adults* by Benton D, Owens DS, Parker PY doi:10.1016/0028-3932(94)90147-3

4. *Glucose improves attention and reaction to frustration in children* by Benton D, Brett V, Brain PF doi:10.1016/0301-0511(87)90016-0

5. *Healthy Eating for Kids*, [tinyurl.com/3oegdj2](http://tinyurl.com/3oegdj2)

6 + 8. *Breakfast Basics*, [tinyurl.com/3sw9flr](http://tinyurl.com/3sw9flr)

7. *Letter 19* by Ellen White, 1892.



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## IN THE BIBLE

Do everything for the glory of God,  
even your eating and drinking.  
*1 Corinthians 10:31 TLB*

In the beginning God said, “I give you every  
seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole  
earth and every tree that has fruit with seed  
in it. They will be yours for food.”  
*Genesis 1:29 NIV*

## IN NATURE

Make breakfast for the birds:

- In Spring and Summer, plant flowers and bushes in your yard and garden that provide food for birds in your area. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology has great ideas at [tinyurl.com/6jode7k](http://tinyurl.com/6jode7k)
- In Fall and Winter, create a bird feeding station that you can enjoy from your window while you eat breakfast. Get started with National Wildlife Federation tips at [tinyurl.com/3g23xrk](http://tinyurl.com/3g23xrk) and The Cornell Lab of Ornithology ideas at [tinyurl.com/3u3pcg](http://tinyurl.com/3u3pcg)

## LEARN MORE

- A Better Breakfast Can Boost a Child’s Brainpower by Allison Aubrey, [npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5738848](http://npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5738848)
- Breakfast for Academic Performance by Gary Hullquist, [tinyurl.com/3he4ozn](http://tinyurl.com/3he4ozn)
- Foods for Thought: Nutrition’s Link to Mood, Memory, Learning and Behavior by Bernell Baldwin, Vicki Griffin, Evelyn Kissinger, [www.adventistbookcenter.com/Detail.tpl?sku=1891041320](http://www.adventistbookcenter.com/Detail.tpl?sku=1891041320)
- Nutrition Guidelines for Parents, [circle.adventist.org/browse/resource.phtml?leaf=4235](http://circle.adventist.org/browse/resource.phtml?leaf=4235)
- Ready, Set, Breakfast, a Kid’s Health article for kids, [kidshealth.org/kid/stay\\_healthy/food/breakfast.html](http://kidshealth.org/kid/stay_healthy/food/breakfast.html)
- Recipes from the Adventist Sanitarium, [sanitarium.com.au/recipes/browse/main/breakfast](http://sanitarium.com.au/recipes/browse/main/breakfast)

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