

Breakfast Counts

Grades 6–8

Lesson Summary

In this lesson, students will investigate the nutrients in both healthful and inadequate breakfast foods. Using this information as well as other information they have learned in class, students will create a 30-60 second video production, news story, or advertisement which will include a comparison of healthful vs. inadequate breakfasts.

Objectives

Students will:

- * Compare nutrients in a variety of breakfast foods.
- * Explain the connection between a healthy breakfast and a body that has the necessary fuel to function well.
- * Produce a video production, news story, or advertisement promoting a healthy breakfast in which healthful and inadequate breakfasts are compared.
- * Present product to the class.

Materials

- * USDA's MyPlate graphic (see www.MyPlate.gov)
- * Empty food packages for nutrient information and breakfast props (e.g. cereal, doughnuts, juices, etc.)
- * Video camera, digital camera, and/or computer to create and edit stories
- * Outdoor play/sports equipment

Procedure

Inside:

1. Explain to your students that eating a breakfast of doughnuts, Pop-Tarts, and a soda might have the same number of calories as a breakfast of oatmeal, yogurt, juice, and a piece of fruit, but the difference in the nutrition one gets from the two different breakfasts is considerable. As the old saying goes, "You are what you eat." Empty calories don't fill the tank when you need to "break the fast" in the morning.
2. Have one student describe a nutritious breakfast – even better if it's what they actually ate that day! Explain that a good breakfast typically consists of foods from at least three of the healthy food groups: grains, vegetables, fruits, dairy, and/or protein. Refer to USDA's MyPlate. Have another student describe a more "typical" U.S. teen breakfast, and then discuss that some students do not eat breakfast at all. Write the examples of a nutritious breakfast and a more typical breakfast on the board. Try to include some foods generally



considered to have “empty calories.” Have students compare selected nutrient amounts (i.e. total calories, protein, fat, saturated or trans-fat, fiber, sodium, calcium, or Vitamin C, etc.) in these two breakfasts by referring to the USDA Nutrient Database (www.nal.usda.gov/fnic) or food nutrition labels. Note that fortified foods may skew results by showing that fortified white bread has as many B vitamins as whole grain bread. Explain how this does not mean they are equally healthy.

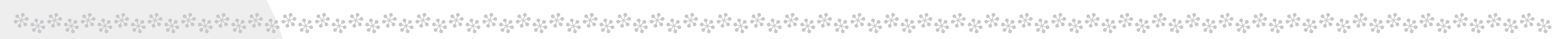
3. Have students name some benefits of eating a good breakfast. Discuss documented facts about regular breakfast eaters. They:
 - are better students,
 - have better concentration,
 - have faster reaction times,
 - have higher energy levels,
 - miss fewer days of school, and,
 - score better on tests.
4. Review facts about what happens when you don't eat breakfast. Explain that during a fast (any long period without food), the amount of sugar (glucose) in the blood decreases. This leads to lethargy, poor concentration, hunger, and drowsiness because the body isn't getting all the glucose or other nutrients it needs to work efficiently. Explain that a nutritious breakfast helps keep blood sugar levels even throughout the morning and supplies the body with nutrients it needs, such as protein, vitamins and minerals, and fiber from complex carbohydrates.

Processing questions: Why do you think so many teens either skip breakfast or eat an unhealthy breakfast? What can a teen or young person do to try to eat a healthy breakfast?

5. Divide the class into small groups. Explain that the students' mission is to create a promotional piece, news story, or advertisement with their group encouraging others to eat a good breakfast. This could take many forms, such as a video explaining the benefits of eating healthfully, or still photos with written text that could be used as a print promotion. Encourage students to get creative! Explain that the finished product needs to contrast students eating a healthful breakfast and having energy to participate in an outdoor winter activity with students who eat nothing for breakfast or who make poor breakfast choices and aren't able to participate as well in the outdoor winter activity. If video is going to be used, have students start by creating a series of “story boards” and scripts that they wish to enact for the camera. Students will need to practice their skit a few times before heading outside to record.

Outside:

1. Using a video or digital camera, have students capture the promotional skits or still shots they designed in the classroom. Take action shots of students engaged in a number of outdoor physical activities, like running, skiing, skating, snowshoeing, playing, etc. Encourage students to take turns being behind the camera and being the subject.



Inside:

1. Have students edit and complete their productions.
2. Each group will share their work with the rest of the class. You may choose to show these productions to the students' peers or to other classes, especially students in younger grades. Your students might enjoy eating healthy breakfast foods while watching the productions.
3. Lastly, you may wish to create a rubric for scoring the effectiveness of the film piece and students' presentation of the assignment.

Special Needs Students

Groups that include special needs students should choose a production in which all group members can participate.

