

August 12, 2020

Release Date: August 19, 2020

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KIDS NEED A HEALTHY BREAKFAST FOR OPTIMAL LEARNING

August is Kids Eat Right Month, the perfect time to emphasize how a healthy breakfast is crucial for learning. Frederick County youth will begin virtual classes on Monday, August 31. Teachers and Administrators have been diligently working to make it a success and families can support learning by serving a healthy breakfast.

Studies show that breakfast eaters concentrate better, solve problems more easily, and have higher overall test scores. Without a morning commute families will now have time to make eating breakfast a priority. Getting organized the night before and keeping it simple will help.

Some quick, easy and balanced breakfast ideas are

- Cheese slices served on whole-grain toast
- Iron-fortified, whole-grain cereal with low-fat milk and banana slices
- Peanut or other nut butters spread on whole-grain toast or waffles or rolled inside a whole-wheat tortilla
- Dried fruit like raisins in oatmeal made with low-fat milk
- Apple slices and low-fat yogurt topped with cereal or crumbled graham crackers
- Scrambled eggs on a toasted whole-wheat English muffin

All of these options are loaded with protein and complex carbohydrates rich in fiber and whole grain. They energize the body, after a night of fasting, and keep stomachs full longer.

While some prepackaged foods may seem convenient, parents should be cautious, as many contain excess sugar and fat. Donuts, toaster pastries, bacon, fruit drinks and some cereals can be laden with extra calories and have little nutritional value. Read the nutrition label to find added sugars. Products can vary tremendously and you will be quite surprised.

To get your kids to eat a healthy breakfast be a positive role model. If your children see you making excuses, they are likely to do the same.

FCPS will be serving breakfast at some locations, yet to be determined. Keep checking the Frederick County School Food and Nutrition website at <https://www.fcpsnutrition.com/> for details. Best wishes for a safe and successful school year!

BREAKFAST CASSEROLE

2018 Maryland Agriculture Calendar (1 Acre Farm)

1 pound pork breakfast sausage
Nonstick cooking spray
2 cups croutons
10 large eggs
1 1/2 cups 2% milk
1 teaspoon ground mustard (dry)
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon black pepper
8 ounces shredded cheddar cheese

Cook the sausage in a large skillet until no longer pink. Drain the fat. Transfer to a plate to cool. Spray a 13x9 baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. Preheat oven to 350°F. Evenly spread the croutons across the bottom of the dish. Cover croutons with a layer of the cooked sausage. In a large bowl, combine the eggs, milk, mustard, salt, pepper and whisk until well combined. Pour egg mixture over the sausage. Top with cheese. Bake uncovered for 50-60 minutes (cheese should be bubbling and turning golden brown). Let cool a few minutes then slice and serve.

GERMAN APPLE PANCAKE

Serves 2

2 apples, peeled and sliced
1/4 cup apple cider
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon honey
1/3 cup milk
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
2 eggs, lightly beaten
1/2 cup self-rising flour
2 teaspoons sugar
Vegetable cooking spray
1 tablespoon powdered sugar

Combine apples and cider in a small saucepan. Cook over medium-high heat until softened. Drain; set aside, add cinnamon and honey and keep warm. Combine milk, vanilla and eggs, stirring well with wire whisk. Add flour and sugar and whisk together. Set aside.

Wrap handle of an 8-inch nonstick skillet with foil; coat skillet with cooking spray. Preheat skillet in oven at 425° for 2 to 3 minutes. Pour batter into hot skillet. Bake at 425° for 15 minutes or until puffy and browned. Remove from skillet. Top with warm apple mixture, and sprinkle with powdered sugar. Serve immediately

EGG IN A BASKET

Serves 1

Vegetable cooking spray
1 unbaked biscuit (use refrigerator biscuit dough, prepared biscuit mix like Bisquick, or a favorite family/home recipe)

1 egg
1 tablespoon cheddar cheese, grated

Preheat oven to 400°F. Lightly spray cup in muffin tin with vegetable cooking spray. Place biscuit in muffin cup, pressing to cover sides and leaving a well in the center of the cup. Break egg into biscuit “basket.” Bake for 10 to 15 minutes. Sprinkle grated cheese on top and return to oven long enough for cheese to melt, about 1-2 minutes. Serve immediately.

CINNAMON FRENCH TOAST

White wheat bread is soft in texture and provides 8 grams of whole grain per slice.

2 large eggs
1/2 cup milk
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon, or to taste
6 slices white wheat bread
Cooking spray
Pancake syrup or sliced fresh fruit (optional)

Thoroughly mix eggs, milk, vanilla and cinnamon. Dip both sides of the bread slices, one at a time, into egg mixture. Re dip if necessary, until all of the egg mixture is absorbed into the bread. Spray a nonstick skillet with cooking spray. Heat over medium heat. Place dipped bread slices on heated skillet. Cook 2 to 3 minutes per side or until both sides are golden brown. Drizzle with pancake syrup or top with sliced fresh fruit (optional). Serve warm.

QUICK RAISIN OATMEAL

This recipe is just a quick and less expensive than buying instant oatmeal.

Serves 2

1/2 cup whole oats (quick cooking or 1 minute oats)
2 tablespoons raisins
2 teaspoons brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1 cup water or milk

Place oats, raisins, brown sugar and cinnamon in 1-quart microwave safe bowl. Add water or milk. Microwave on high for 1 minute. Stir and cook for 1 more minute. Top with butter or margarine if desired.

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