

BREAKFAST: Homework for Parents

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As difficult as it is to be a parent, especially with today's financial burdens, I ask that you consider adding this to your list: Please make a protein-rich breakfast for your child(ren) every day. You will want to do this for yourselves, too, simply to feel your best, and meet daily responsibilities readily.

The reasons are many.

A study shows that people who eat breakfast *live longer*. This simple act contributes to longevity independent of age, and diagnoses. Another study showed typists' speed and accuracy at 4 pm depended on their breakfast protein intake, and it could not be made up at lunch. The book *Circadian Prescription* (author Sydney M. Baker MD) describes the physiology in play: we digest heavy foods (protein and fat) best before 3 or 4 pm, and protein after that creates mild toxins in the body. (Consider the big American supper !)

Breakfast protein *stabilizes blood sugar for the entire day.*

Many functions in the body are blood-sugar dependent, such as

- learning! (pretty important, for students, yes?)
- co-ordination (musicians, athletes, fewer playground accidents anyone?)
- mood! (adults and children need this steadiness)
- judgment (older children, parents, teachers -- we adults ALL use this faculty!)
- appetite free of cravings! (without a stable blood sugar, we are subject to needing food in a rush, and we grab soda, candy, alcohol, cocaine -- whatever our predilection.)

The old wisdom says: Have breakfast like a king (queen), lunch like a prince (princess), and supper like a pauper (bag lady).

Having money in the bank to spend makes sense, and putting food in our nutritional bank in the morning is even more important. Otherwise, we borrow from our organs all day long, perform sub-optimally all day, then re-pay with interest at suppertime. It is not surprising to see problems with weight gain, poor sleep, poor digestion, when there is no breakfast protein as a foundation for the day.

What foods are protein? How much protein is right?

Strong protein foods are: Eggs (organic, free-range if you can), meat, fish, poultry, cheese including cottage cheese. A portion of four or five ounces of any of these starts the day right for most average size adults, and the amount can be less for children with smaller body size.

Weak proteins are: milk, yogurt, beans, nuts, seeds. These foods require larger volume (approximately three times) to obtain a comparable amount of protein.

To begin a new habit of eating breakfast protein, the first step is to have a LIGHT SUPPER,

such as soup, salad, grain, fruit (NO protein, or very little). You will wake up hungry the next morning.

Secondly, give yourself (or your child) AN HOUR AND A HALF in the morning between waking up and having to leave the house. This time allows space for our vegetative* functions: time to have a bowel movement, see what the weather is and decide on clothes, and let appetite develop and prepare food and eat.

*The vegetative part of the human being is the unconscious part that provides the basis for all our accomplishments, whether we are students or executives. Give space for it, to have health for a long time.

Thirdly -- and this applies to adults only, I hope -- no coffee before you eat. Have breakfast protein first and THEN have coffee. Coffee kills appetite, and we need our appetite in the morning.

Please don't take my word for this. Try it yourself for two weeks, and be a good observer. More than one patient has come back to me and said, "Doctor, the most important thing you told me was to eat protein at breakfast!"

I wish you excellent health, and happy children who are eager to learn and free and secure in their body movements!