



Gone are the lazy, dog days of summer. We are back in busy routines. Nutrition can be the first thing to slip, so be prepared.

## Breakfast

Yes, it is morning, same as every day. Yes, you have to wake up and go to school (or work). No amount of whining will change things...

*Just Do IT!*

Keep breakfast the least stressful part of your morning routine and have a breakfast menu plan. Breakfast is important, and the most skipped meal of the day. Adding variety to your breakfast will not only ensure you get a variety of nutrients, but may also help bring the kids to the table faster (hopefully dressed and ready for school too ;).

- Egg in the middle, toad in the hole, whatever you call it, its good nutrition and easy (Hole cut into bread, egg cooked inside)
- Non-fat/low fat yogurt with fruit and nuts
- Hot cereal such as oatmeal with cinnamon or nutmeg, toss in a few raisins and pecans.
- Peanut Butter on... anything: toast, warmed frozen waffle, apples, rice cake
- Smoothie – the options are endless, google some great fruit/vegetable combos.
- Egg, ham sandwich (bread, waffles, English muffin)

- Whole-wheat English muffin with a sliced avocado and slice of low fat cheese
- Scrambled egg rolled up in a whole-wheat tortilla with salsa
- Whole-wheat pita stuffed with (low-fat cottage cheese and peaches; peanut butter and banana; avocado and spinach; your wildest creations)

## Dinner

The next busiest part of the day. Homework, swim practice (and all other activities), tired-cranky moods... not the best combination for cooking. Try these tips to be prepared for busy dinner times:

### **Have a Week's Worth of Menus in Mind**

Whether you write them down or keep them in your head, you need five to seven kid-tested, parent-approved main dishes. Pick options that are easy and popular with everyone. Once you have an entrée, such as tacos, spaghetti, oven-baked chicken or slow-cooker stew, all you have to add is a vegetable and/or fruit and perhaps a whole-grain roll to complete the meal.

### **Keep Your Kitchen Stocked with Quick-to-Fix Foods**

Whenever you shop, look for specials on staples (rice, pasta, beans, etc.) as well as frozen and canned fruits and vegetables with little or no added salt or sugars. With a

wide variety of tasty choices on hand, you'll only have to worry about the main dish when it's time to make dinner. Add fresh produce items when in season.

### **Prepare Multiple Batches of Main Ingredients**

If you're cooking ground beef, it's just as easy to cook a double or triple batch. Freeze extra servings to reheat for tacos or casseroles. Try slicing, marinating and freezing extra beef, pork, chicken or fish for stir-fry dishes. Drop any one of these protein options into a wok or skillet for quick cooking on a busy night.

### Time

"Please, just hurry up and eat!" To which my oldest replies, "But mom, you tell us that we should take our time and savor our food." 🙄 Of course, she remembered that. Life is give and take, you have to prioritize what comes first. Being on time for school trumps savoring the "toad in the hole". Maintaining good nutrition during stressful times requires planning ahead and realizing life still happens, just do the best you can.

### Monthly challenge:

**Parents** – Before your next grocery trip, think of your week's worth of dinner ideas.

**Teenage Athlete** – You can do IT! Get up, and YOU take care of your own breakfast. Perhaps take a moment before bed the night before to have a plan.