

EAT

CAFETERIA CONNECTION

Ask the students to examine the MyPyramid Poster in the cafeteria. Tell them to look for one healthy food or beverage in each of the five food groups that they might enjoy either at home or in school. Ask them to take special note of the non-traditional breakfast items on the poster. Discuss their observations and ideas when the students return back from lunch after they've had an opportunity to review the poster.

LEARN

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Objective

Students will explain why breakfast is important.

10 Minute Lesson

Through teacher-guided discussion, students will discuss the negative consequences of breakfast skipping and gain understanding that eating breakfast will help them feel and learn their best. A problem solving case study is used to spark discussion. Self evaluation is used to reinforce lesson concepts.

LIVE

HOME ACTIVITY

Write notes in your student planner or tape notes in strategic areas at home to remind you to eat a healthy breakfast. Make a list of foods you would enjoy. Plan a way to have them handy, and write down some ideas about how to make breakfast a reality in your world. Or, if your school has a breakfast program, talk with friends, and plan your days to meet some buddies at school for a morning meal.

Teacher's Notes

Background

Research shows that students who do not eat breakfast may experience:

- Increased depression and anxiety
- Increased fatigue, restlessness and sleepiness
- Increased hyperactivity
- Decreased attention span
- Decreased class participation
- Decreased time spent on task
- Increased need for discipline
- Increased visits to school nurse: headaches, stomach aches
- Increased absenteeism
- Overall poorer grades, in particular in arithmetic
- Decreased ability to distinguish between similar images
- Slower memory recall

LEARN 10 Minute Lesson

Read the Problem-Solving Case Scenario

John remembers from health class all the reasons why breakfast is important. Sure, if you don't eat breakfast, you might feel tired and you might not be in a good mood. Yes, it helps keep you on top of your game at school. And true, breakfast may "rev up" your metabolism, helping you burn calories all day long. It all sounds good, but John doesn't eat on most mornings. He is usually up late finishing homework since he can't do it right away after school- he's too busy with basketball practice, and after that, its some downtime with friends before heading home for dinner. When the alarm goes off in the morning, John hits the snooze button. When he gets up, there's barely enough time to get dressed and out the door, let alone time to eat. Although he's not usually hungry when he leaves the house, he is starving well before lunchtime, which is not until 11:30 AM. Sometimes it's so bad it's hard to concentrate during Spanish class right before lunch. It's no wonder- he usually eats around 9:00 the night before- maybe some potato chips and soda- while finishing his geometry homework. Today as usual, John wolfs down his lunch, but it's not enough to eat. Just before the bell rings to go back to class, he quickly eats a candy bar- he always stashes one away when he packs his backpack at night- just the thing for such emergencies.

Examine the Case Facts

How long would John fast if he didn't eat between 9 PM and 11:30 AM the next day? *14 ½ hours*

What are some consequences of John not eating breakfast or fasting for that long? *Feeling uncomfortable (hungry), inability to concentrate, overeating at lunch (and not the healthiest choice) due to extreme hunger. If John took a Spanish test, he might not be able to do his best.*

Solve the Problem

What could John do differently to shorten his fast? *Instead of the candy bar, John could stash a breakfast bar, a piece of fruit, and a bottle of water in his backpack. He could eat that on the way to school. If there is a school breakfast program, he could eat the school breakfast.*

Introduce and explain the EAT Cafeteria Connection and LEARN Home Activity to the students.

Optional Enrichment Idea

Divide the class into groups, and have groups work together to develop messages to tell all the students in the school about the importance and benefits of eating breakfast in way that will get their peers' attention. Examples are: develop a story for the school newspaper, design a bulletin board to display in the cafeteria, create table tents for the school dining area(s), or record a public service announcement or commercial to read with the morning announcements. Explore if students have other ideas. If your school has one, have students promote the school breakfast program.