

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 explore the meaning of the word “breakfast.” Discussion will enable students to identify the negative consequences of breakfast skipping. Students will gain understanding that eating breakfast will help them feel and learn their best. Self evaluation is used to reinforce lesson concepts.

LIVE

HOME ACTIVITY

For one week (including weekends), record in your student planner or in a notebook the last time you have something to eat each evening. Then record the time you first have something to eat the next day and whether or not you ate breakfast that morning. Calculate the average amount of time per day that you fasted for the whole week. If there were days you skipped breakfast, re-calculate by how many hours you could have shortened your total fasting time for the week if you had eaten a morning meal. Instruct students to reflect on their own eating habits: Could they be taking more advantage of the benefits of breakfast?

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

Lead Group Discussion- discuss the meaning of the word “Breakfast”

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the definition of BREAKFAST is “the first meal of the day.” *Tell the students you want to examine the word a little more closely: “Let’s break the word down into 2 separate words: ‘break’ and ‘fast’.”*

BREAK means “to stop or bring an end to.” **One meaning of FAST** is “to abstain from food.” **In other words, go for a long time without eating.** *Ask the students if they ever heard of a hunger strike- explain these people are on a “fast.”* **Breakfast now means to end the fast- or more simply, the meal that ends the long period of time we go without food overnight.**

Poll the class to determine whether they had breakfast today. *If the students haven’t had lunch yet, ask how many are fasting right now. If the students already had lunch, ask the class how many did not break their fast until lunchtime, and ask if anyone is still fasting.*

Ask students if they know the consequences of breakfast skipping. *If you don’t eat breakfast you might feel tired. You might not be in a good mood. It would be harder to concentrate in class and do your best in school. These problems are because your brain is not being properly fueled by food. Without food you will have less physical energy because your muscles are fasting, too. You might experience other physical symptoms like a headache or stomach ache. Eating breakfast might even help you maintain healthy weight because if you skip breakfast, you may be more likely to overeat or make less healthy food choices later in the day because you are very hungry. Breakfast may even “rev up” your metabolism, helping you burn calories all day long.*

Comment to the students: *You can break your fast with traditional breakfast foods- cereal, toast, eggs, fruit, juice, milk, etc. Microwaving some of last night’s leftovers, heating up a slice of frozen pizza, or blending some milk, yogurt, or fruit in a blender are examples of non-traditional foods you could eat in the morning if you’re crunched for time. If the school has a breakfast program- taking advantage of it is a way to fit breakfast into a busy day.*

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

Optional Enrichment Idea

Have students share the data they recorded for the LIVE home activity with the class so they can analyze it. Examples: What is the total amount of time the entire class fasted during the week? What are the average and the mean numbers of times students ate breakfast in one week? What % of students ate breakfast less than 3 days a week? Based on the number of students in the school, if you were to assume this class’s breakfast habits was typical of other students, how many students in the school would eat breakfast less than 3 days a week?