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CLIPPINGS

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For Immediate Release

Start the School Day Off Right

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When we think about beginning the day off properly what comes to mind? Maybe getting up at a decent hour and pouring ourselves a cup of Joe? Another extremely important part of starting the day off right for both us and our children is eating a filling, balanced breakfast.

Many of us may have heard the phrase, "breakfast is the most important meal of the day." Unlike many thrown-around phrases, this one is entirely true. It is especially true for children regarding attendance and participation during school. Giving a child a power-packed breakfast can result in longer amounts of concentration during school hours, meaning your child can make the most of their day at school when it comes to learning and interacting with others.

During busy mornings, it is not always easy to leave time for a sit-down meal, although that is the ideal situation. Below are two energy packed, mind fueling breakfast ideas that are "grab and go." These can be eaten 5 minutes before the family is out the door or on the bus ride to school. Another helpful tip to get through the busy mornings is prepping breakfast the night before. Try making overnight oats or breakfast cookies the night before for a few extra minutes in the morning.

Overnight Oatmeal with Berries

Serving Size: 1/2 cup dry oats

Serves: 1

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup low-fat milk (or less for thicker oatmeal)
- 1/4 cup Greek yogurt, fat-free (plain, vanilla or fruit flavored)
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup uncooked rolled oats
- 1/4 cup berries of choosing, frozen

Instructions:

1. Combine milk, Greek yogurt, honey, cinnamon, and vanilla extract in a container or jar with a lid.
2. Add oats and mix well.
3. Gently fold in berries.

4. Cover and refrigerate 8 hours to overnight.
5. Enjoy cold or heat as desired.

Nutrition information per serving: 311 calories, 4g total fat, 1g saturated fat, 7mg cholesterol, 86mg sodium, 53g total carbohydrate, 9g fiber, 21g sugar, 17g protein

Whole Grain Breakfast Cookie

Serving size: 1 cookie

Serves: 12

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons water
- 2 cups packed brown sugar
- 2 ½ cups oats
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups whole wheat flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon table salt
- 1 ½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 cup cooking oil
- ½ cup applesauce
- 5 large eggs
- 1 ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¾ cup seedless raisins
- 1/3 cup dried cranberries
- ¼ cup walnut pieces

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit for a conventional oven, or 325 degrees Fahrenheit if using a convection oven. Grease or line sheet pans with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl (an electric mixer is not necessary), stir together the oats, flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, and cinnamon. Make a well in the center and add the oil, applesauce, water, egg whites, and vanilla. Mix until well blended. Stir in the raisins, dried cranberries, and walnuts.
3. Scoop cookies using #16 scoop (about the size of a golf ball). Place cookies 2 inches apart onto the prepared sheet pans and flatten well with wet hands. These cookies do not flatten very much while baking.
4. In the preheated oven, bake 8 minutes for chewy cookies. The trick is to under bake them a bit, and the result is a soft, cakey cookie kids will love.
5. Pair with a banana and a glass of milk to add balance to the meal.

Nutrition information per serving: 299 calories, 11g total fat, 2g saturated fat, 230mg sodium, 45 total carbohydrate, 4g fiber, 6g protein.

These meals are more filling than your average bowl of cereal, and tastier too! Consuming a breakfast with higher amounts of protein and grains will lead to a productive day for both you and your children. This school year make eating breakfast a part of your family's morning routine!

**Recipes from United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Mixing Bowl Website.*