
A Study on the Benefit of Breakfast Consumption in Children

Breakfast has a wide range of benefits that can help a person's performance, particularly in school. A study that took place in Norway conducted a correlational study involving the frequency in which students eat meals and their performance in school, and the conclusion was that regular meal patterns, that is, three meals a day, seven days a week, increase one's odds of doing well in school, with breakfast being critical to increasing the performance of girls and all meals being important to the performance of boys. They also discovered that, beyond just eating those meals, eating healthy meals further increase children's chances at better performance in school (Stea and Torstveit 2014). The opposite is also true, with the study showing that high consumption of snack foods as opposed to healthy meals and unhealthy habits like smoking cigarettes harming your chances of performing well academically. In general, it is shown that healthy habits, particularly the habit of eating a good breakfast every morning, is important to one's cognitive ability and academic performance.

There are many reasons for this marked increase in performance from students after they eat a good breakfast. One reason in particular is the fact that your body is still consuming energy and the fasting period between dinner and breakfast is large, and the body needs to eat to keep up. This is especially true in children and adolescents, whose higher demand of sleep and higher metabolism increases the need to increase their glucose levels the next day, or their performance (and by extension, their education) will suffer (Adolphus, Lawton, Dye 2013). If children are deprived of a healthy breakfast, their performance will suffer, specifically due to the fact that, as children, they simply require more energy to make up for the energy lost during the night before.

In the same study, it is also shown that children are better behaved if they have breakfast. As the quality and frequency of breakfasts eaten improved, so too did the behavior of students. Once students were integrated into a School Breakfast Program, there was a significant decrease in off-task behavior, as well as an increase in other behaviors which can be seen as healthy, such as longer periods of activity during the day and generally better behavior (in the context of performing academically) during school. There were also a myriad of studies shown that prove the fact that healthy breakfasts do indeed increase academic performance, with separate studies showing an increase in performance in arithmetic, language, memory, and other areas of academics.

Some problems involved with studies involving these studies are that students who eat a healthy breakfast everyday likely have other qualities that help increase performance in school. For example, students with a rigid schedule who eat healthy every morning also likely have better behavior for schooling, due to the fact that they likely develop other, better habits, and generally will perform better in a situation such as grade school. Also, children in lower socio-economic standings might see an improvement in schooling due to the iron and iodine within food that they are given in these studies, which they might have lacked before. These two nutrients have been linked to improvements in cognitive function.

Overall, breakfast appears to have a great many benefits to children and adolescents. While the

behavioral benefits are still disputed, with some studies showing a lack of change in behavior or aggression when breakfast is consistently eaten, the increases to academic performance is a very common result in these studies. Correlational studies show that students with higher test scores tend to eat three meals a day, every day, and breakfast intervention experiments show an increase in performance when children eat breakfast every day. In general, breakfast is important for children due to the nutritional benefits and the increases in quality of life in general.

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