

# Your Health Matters

## GOOD MORNING!

When morning arrives, and it comes time to choose between hitting the snooze button or heading to the kitchen, the snooze button often seems more appealing. If your morning starts like most families, it's a flurry of activity – rushing to ready for work or school, fixing lunches, and racing out the door. Tomorrow, take a break for breakfast. Eating a nutritious breakfast is one of the most important things you can do. And for children, a healthy breakfast is especially important.

Skipping breakfast allows the body's night-long fast to continue, which stresses your child's growing body. Taking time for breakfast stops the fast. Even if it's just cold cereal with low-fat milk, or yogurt and granola, breakfast is vital to your child's health. It helps your child take in more fiber, calcium, iron, vitamin C, and other vitamins and minerals. It supports your child's growth and development, and it determines how well your child will perform in school that day.

Studies show children who eat a complete breakfast will make fewer mistakes and will work faster in math. They will have a better attention span and memory, and will perform better on vocabulary tests.

Research also shows the quality of food children eat affects their thinking processes and is critical to their growth and development. Normal brain development requires a variety of nutrients, including proteins, carbohydrates, water, and fat.

Unfortunately, most kids eat too many empty calories – calories from foods high in fat and sugar. Almost one in four kids in the US live in a household where they don't get enough food, or enough nutritious food. More than half of teen-agers skip breakfast every day. Research shows that kids who don't eat a healthy breakfast miss more days of school, and perform worse in school. Those who do eat breakfast pay closer attention in school, behave better, are less likely to be absent or late, and don't visit the school nurse as often.

Even kids recognize the benefits of breakfast. In one study, kids stated that eating breakfast gives them more energy and helps them pay attention in school. But, parents, they need you to provide the nutritious breakfast they need. Tomorrow morning, slow down. Take a break for breakfast and make sure your child gets a healthy start to the day.

Rise and shine, breakfast is served!

The Montgomery County Health Department loves taking care of your family, and works every day to protect, promote and improve health in our community. To learn more, call 573-564-2495 or visit us online at [www.montgomerycountyhealth.org](http://www.montgomerycountyhealth.org) or on Facebook or Twitter @healthyMOCO. ■

