

Most important

By Soraiya Imran

The health of the present generation is fast deteriorating, in large part due to the fact that it doesn't take a proper breakfast

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THE pace of life has become very fast in today's world and almost everyone is part of this hustle-bustle. It is also probably due to their hectic schedules that many people have adopted unhealthy lifestyles. This includes working all day without resting, taking improper diet, not doing appropriate exercises, sleeping very late at night and so on.

What people don't realize is that such unhealthy lifestyles have an adverse effect on their health, both mentally and physically.

Skipping meals is also a part of an unhealthy lifestyle and the meal that is most likely to be skipped by all; children, teenagers and adults alike, is breakfast.

Some people say that they skip breakfast because they are on a diet. While others just don't feel like eating anything in the morning. But the reason that most breakfast skippers give is the lack of time in the morning as they are in a hurry to get to their schools and workplaces. Whatever the reason, if

fat or protein into a usable form for your brain to function.

It is for this reason breakfast skippers are not very active and energetic at work. They easily become tired and irritable. Their verbal fluency and attentiveness are hampered due to the lack of energy in their body. They are also not good at dealing

active and energetic because breakfast helps to stabilize blood sugar levels that regulate appetite and energy. Regular breakfast eaters work with more concentration and they are good at dealing with problems. Their mental and physical performance, memory and mood is much better than that of non-breakfast eaters.

not overdoing your fat and cholesterol consumption. A good breakfast need not be time consuming. Some good choices for a nutritious breakfast might be: a glass of orange juice, whole grain cereal or a slice of whole wheat bread with some butter or jam and a glass of milk or a cup of low fat yogurt. You may also have

breakfast prevents you from indulging in high calorie snacks or overeating during lunchtime. Over-eating places undue stress on your body and this may lead to unwanted weight gain. Eating a healthy breakfast regulates your food intake better. In this way you can maintain your weight and remain in good shape.

So what actually constitutes a healthy breakfast? Ideally a good breakfast should include complex carbohydrates, fibre, some proteins, vitamin C and a little bit of fat. Just make sure you are



Illustration by Huzefa Younus

Whatever the reason, if you are one of those who don't have breakfast then it is time for you to realize that you are skipping the most important meal of the day. Yes, breakfast is termed by the doctors as the one meal that you shouldn't miss.

According to health experts, skipping the first meal of the day increases chances of developing diabetes, becoming obese or even having a heart ailment. Your brain runs on glucose, which is the fuel you need to think, walk, talk and carry on all the other activities. Suppose you have your dinner at 9pm or 10pm, overnight your body uses up its glycogen stores i.e. its carbohydrate stores. When you wake up the next morning, your blood sugar level is low. This means you don't have the energy to perform at your best. If you don't eat anything and wait until about noon or so to eat, you have gone 13 or 14 hours with nothing in your system. Your poor brain and the rest of your body has to work extra hard to break down any stored carbohydrates or turn

with problems as they need to be.

On the other hand, those who eat breakfast within two hours of waking, feel more

A common misconception is that skipping breakfast will help to lose weight.

You should be aware that consumption of a healthy

whole eggs occasionally key is to select a variety of foods from different groups. Anything that can be a healthy lunch or

The happy class

THE school lunch plays an important role in the nutrition of children. It fulfils one-third of the meals of a school day, one-fourth meals of the week and at least one-sixth of the meals of a calendar year.

The breakfast also provides children an experience with food that helps them get good dietary habits. The main purpose of the school lunch is to improve the child's nutrition.

The origin and development of school lunch started in England during Boer War in 1900, when it was discovered that most of the men who presented themselves for military services were physically unfit. Following investigation it was discovered that they suffered malnutrition during childhood. Following this a government act allowed all local schools to use school funds and establish lunches for malnourished children.

However, till yet, in Pakistan, any such programme hasn't been carried out. There is a need to educate our

children towards the importance of healthy and nutritional food. Certain goals should serve as a guideline in the establishment and maintenance of a good school lunch programme that would be applicable to all schools, primary, kindergarten and secondary, regardless of their size and location.

Food that is served should be nutritious and suitable for children and should be served under sanitary conditions. The food should fulfil all the nutritional needs of interesting texture, colour and flavour and should be neatly and attractively served. The environment or the lunch where the lunch is served should be clean, well lighted and reasonably spacious and should have good ventilation. There should also be a washroom in the lunch room.

Tables and chairs should be sturdy and of correct height for the children. Table and floor surface should be of that material that can be easily cleaned.

meal

can also be a healthy breakfast.

Some people don't feel that hungry early in the morning. If you or some other members in your family are among such people then you can always try some new ideas to tempt yourself and others to have breakfast. Make fruit salad or arrange cereal with dried fruit or fresh fruit toppings. Make toast and spread it with peanut and chocolate-spread.

Instead of having a glass of plain milk, make milk shake, custard or fruit yogurt. You can also have leftovers from the night before such as spaghetti, cold pizza, brown rice, beans, vegetable salad or a piece of chicken for your breakfast.

A healthy breakfast is essential for the growth and development of children. It enhances their energy for learning at school and play. Parents can set a good example for their children by eating breakfast with them. It can be a great way to start the day. Mothers often complain that their children running late for school leave the house without breakfast. One solution to this problem is that, mothers can wake their children fifteen minutes earlier than usual time. If this is not possible then children can take breakfast with them on the bus. Fruits like bananas or apples, a carton of juice or milk, a chicken or egg-sandwich or even a small bag of dry cereal or dried fruits can make a good portable breakfast which children can have on the bus or at school before classes start.

Making and eating breakfast doesn't take a lot of time. To save time in the morning you can even prepare your breakfast the night before and keep it in the

Information regarding the food should be placed on the bulletin board with colourful pictures and other guidelines that provide them a good education regarding food.

Children consider the lunch period as a happy period because it is a time in which children associate with an enjoyable meal and pleasant companionship so the atmosphere should be calm and friendly. Lunch period should be of sufficient length (not less than 20 minutes). It is the responsibility of the school to provide facilities that permit children to 'live what they learn' in the classroom, washing hands before touching food is an example.

Parents and school authorities should develop and implement a practicable plan for extending the school lunch nutrition programme into the homes. Schools too have a responsibility to provide information to the parents regarding programme.

These kinds of programmes should be carried out in the schools of Pakistan to make our children physically and mentally strong and enable them to face the challenges of 21st century. — *Khalil Zafar & Khair un Nissa Zafar*