

# Health Unit Media Release



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## Children who eat breakfast learn better

**Children who eat breakfast are likely to have improved academic performance related to memory, grades and school attendance.** It is estimated that **51% and 64% of Canadian boys and girls respectively do not eat breakfast regularly.** Studies show that children who eat breakfast often have better concentration, better attitudes towards school and are more attentive.

Children should eat a breakfast that includes at least 3 of the 4 food groups from *Canada's Food Guide*: Vegetables and Fruit, Grain Products, Milk and Alternatives, Meat and Alternatives. These foods provide essential nutrients a child needs to start the school day. According to Meena Parameswaran, Registered Dietitian "Breakfast doesn't have to be cereal and toast. If children like left over spaghetti, chilli or pizza for breakfast, go for it!"

The best way to promote healthy eating behaviours in children and youth is to set a good example. According to Parameswaran, "**Children are their parents' biggest fans, when it comes to making food choices. If parents eat breakfast it is likely that their children will eat it too**". Parameswaran encourages parents, care providers, families and friends to start the day off with breakfast and create meals and snacks from the four food groups. Providing **healthy foods at home and at school** can help children perform well in school and **establish healthy eating patterns that last a lifetime.**

If you would like free resources about:

- Breakfast, school lunch and snack ideas
- Nutrition and healthy eating tips for kids and/or;
- School Nutrition Programs,

please call the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit's **Health Action Line toll free at 1-800-660-5853 (613-345-5685) and ask to speak with a Registered Dietitian.** You can also visit our website at [www.healthunit.org/nutrition](http://www.healthunit.org/nutrition).

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