



# GIVE BREAKFAST A BOOST!



What your child eats for breakfast can set the tone for the entire day—and even for a lifetime of healthy habits. Research shows that choices and attitudes toward this one simple morning ritual can impact energy level, behavior, academic performance and future food choices.

## HOW TO BUILD A BETTER BREAKFAST

The ideal breakfast should emphasize fiber, whole grains and protein, and should have as little added sugar as possible. Every morning aim to eat at least one of each category:



### PROTEIN

eggs, beans, nuts  
or nut butter, yogurt,  
cottage cheese, tofu



### WHOLE GRAIN

whole grain toast,  
bagel or tortillas,  
oatmeal, granola



### VEGETABLES & FRUITS

## WHY MORNING MEALS MATTER

- Studies indicate that eating a healthy breakfast can positively affect cognitive function and academic performance, and support emotional stability and alertness.
- Research also suggests that children who eat breakfast regularly are more likely to meet overall recommendations for vitamin and mineral intake.
- Kids who skip breakfast do not typically make up the nutrients later in the day. Instead, they tend to fill up on nutrient-poor snacks at school and are less likely to eat enough fruits and veggies.
- Eating breakfast is associated with increased likelihood of healthy weight.

## GO A STEP FURTHER Small Steps with Big Impact

- Get your greens first thing! A green smoothie is the perfect way to ensure your kids get great nutrients early in the day.
- Cut the butter and oil. Put just fruit spread on the morning toast. Try eggs poached or hardboiled instead of fried.
- Choose whole grain versions of your favorite morning breads (toast, tortillas, bagels, waffles, etc.)
- Look for leaner meats, including turkey bacon or turkey sausage, or replace with vegetarian bacon or sausage.
- Reduce the juice and replace it with whole fruits.
- Ditch the boxes! It's tempting to buy premade pastries and packets of oatmeal, but many have added sugar. Save money and cut the sugar by making your own.
- Learn to make smoothies! Read the "Smoothie Solutions" edition of *Better Bites*. They're a great way to pack in more fruits and vegetables.



## TIPS FOR PARENTS Steps for Smoother Mornings

Half the breakfast battle is finding time for it. Try these really simple tips to carve out the extra 10 minutes you need to get some nutrition—that's all it takes!

- After grocery shopping, go ahead and pre-rinse veggies and fruits before storing them so you can grab and go later.
- At the beginning of the week, peel and cut veg and fruits and put them in individual lunch containers in the refrigerator.
- Boil a batch of eggs or make a dozen muffins on Sunday for use throughout the week.
- Pack lunches and prep breakfast the night before.
- Pick clothes out the night before and find a dedicated place for your keys—no more frantic searches taking up all that time you could be enjoying breakfast together!

# HANDS-ON ACTIVITY Hardboiled “Egg-imals”

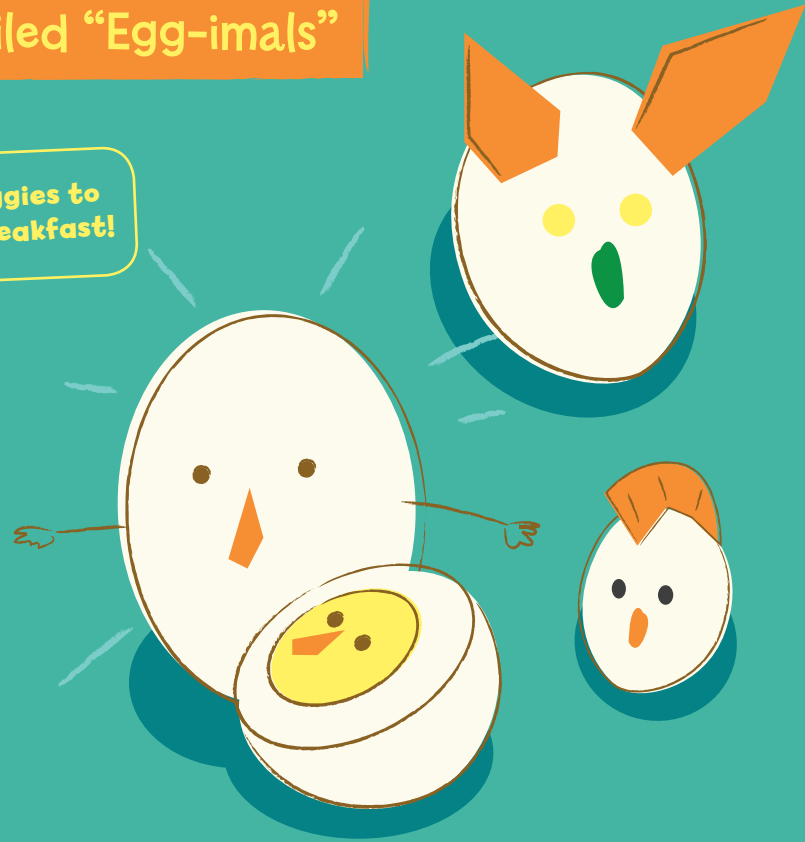
Peel and decorate your hardboiled egg with veggies to make it look like an animal—then enjoy it for breakfast!

## Step 1

**Cut a raw carrot or bell pepper into shapes to make ears or feathers:** round for a mouse, pointy for a cat, oblong for a bunny. Cut triangles for a bird’s beak or a rooster’s comb. Make long slices for a spider’s legs or a cat’s tail. Grated carrots can become whiskers for any animal. Cut up black olives to create eyes, a nose or any other features you wish. Add a broccoli floret for a bunny tail. Get creative with other veggies too!

## Step 2

**Gently press the carrots and the olives into the surface of the egg.** Use a fork or butter knife to create lines or dots in the surface if you wish.



Put this chart on the refrigerator for quick reference.

## RECIPES

### Bring more balance to busy mornings with these winning combinations!

Most are easy to eat in the car, too. Coach kids to assemble these breakfast items by themselves as part of the morning routine—this fosters healthy habits and independence too.

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| hardboiled egg + whole grain crackers + fresh fruit                    | whole grain tortilla + refried beans or hummus spread                       | oatmeal + chopped nuts + fresh fruit                          |
| apple or applesauce + handful of walnuts or almonds                    | whole grain tortilla + guacamole + carrot sticks                            | fruit and/or nut muffin + hardboiled egg                      |
| whole grain toast + light cream cheese + sliced apples or strawberries | whole grain tortilla + scrambled egg + tomatoes + turkey or veggie sausage  | unsweetened yogurt or cottage cheese + berries + chopped nuts |
| whole grain toast or bagel + peanut or almond butter + sliced banana   | whole grain waffle + peanut or almond butter + raisins or dried cranberries | skim mozzarella cheese stick + fresh fruit                    |

WHICH COMBO IS YOUR FAVORITE?!

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