

Making Breakfast Time Count: Six Steps To ‘Heaven’ In The Morning

(NAPSA)—For most people, mornings are tough. The morning rush includes everything from taking a shower to getting dressed to packing lunch and checking homework. Eating a basic breakfast and spending quality time with family seems to be nearly impossible these days. However, nutrition experts say that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, especially for kids.

Research shows breakfast helps restore energy (glucose) that diminishes at night during sleep. That energy ultimately helps improve performance, creativity, memory and problem-solving skills. Even a simple breakfast like a bowl of cereal and a glass of orange juice can provide a full day's supply of many of the necessary nutrients and key vitamins for a healthy diet.

“Everyone wants to spend more time with their families—and breakfast can be a good time to accomplish that,” says Ronni Eisenberg, an expert in organizing the home and family and author of *Organize Your Home*. “It’s important to set a morning routine. Begin with prioritizing what you have to accomplish in the morning and then determine what can wait until later in the day or week.”

Here are some simple tips to help you make the most of your morning:



1. Start your morning the night before. It may sound crazy, but the best time to get a jump-start on your morning is the night before. After you’ve relaxed from your hectic day, start planning for tomorrow. Lay out clothes, pack lunches, set the breakfast table or pick out the next day’s menu before you go to bed. You’ll wake up refreshed for the new day with extra time to spare.

2. Time out. Make a list of your morning tasks, then time how long it takes to complete each one. Wake up at least that much earlier and add an extra 15 to 20 minutes, built-in for surprises. Your routine will run more smoothly and you’ll stay on schedule.

3. Put the focus on “you.” Get yourself ready for the day before waking up the kids and getting them ready. You’ll be much more relaxed and efficient without the pressure of getting yourself ready. You’ll also have an extra few

moments to yourself before the family’s daily routine begins.

4. Get the kids involved. Don’t put the burden completely on yourself. Having the kids pour their own orange juice or bag their own lunch gives you a free hand to pack your briefcase or fill the dishwasher while teaching kids valuable lessons on nutrition and responsibility.

5. Plan your menu. Preparing a well-balanced breakfast doesn’t have to be a big production. Before you go shopping for the week, plan your breakfast menu. You’ll have all your breakfast needs in stock and you won’t have to worry about running out of orange juice in the morning.

6. Color code it. A healthy breakfast is one that includes whole grains, fruit and protein. Create a list of your family’s favorite breakfast foods that fall into these categories and code by color. Each night, let the kids choose something from each color group (for example, whole wheat toast, orange juice and yogurt). They’ll have a well-balanced breakfast, and you’ll help teach them about eating right.

Mornings matter. They set the tone for the day and usually are the one time that families are together. A healthy breakfast and an easy morning ritual not only gives your family the best start to their day, it also lets you rest easy that you’ve taken care of your family.