



The Myths of School Breakfast

There are basically two types of foods offered in schools during the school day:

- Meals served through the federally funded U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) school meal programs
- All other foods typically offered through vending machines, fundraisers, class parties, etc. - these foods are known as “competitive foods” because they compete with school meals

Myth: School breakfast is only available to students who qualify for free or reduced price meals.

Fact: The national School Breakfast Program is a federally funded program available to all schools. All children can participate. Some students do qualify for free or reduced price meals, and others may pay a small fee.

Myth: Eating breakfast at home is better than eating school breakfast.

Fact: Studies show that students who eat breakfast at school, closer to academic instruction and testing time, perform better on standardized tests than those who skip breakfast or eat breakfast at home. School breakfast is a healthy, convenient choice for families.

Myth: School meals make children obese.

Fact: Studies have shown that children who eat breakfast on a regular basis are less likely to be overweight. Many of the items offered as part of the School Breakfast Program are low in fat, sugar and sodium (salt) and are offered in portion sizes that are appropriate for children.

Myth: Schools serve junk food for school breakfast.

Fact: School Breakfast Programs in North Carolina offer a choice of entrée, fruit or 100% fruit juice and low fat or fat free milk. Meals served under the School Breakfast Program must, by federal law, meet nutrition guidelines based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. No more than 30% of calories can come from fat and less than 10% from saturated fat. School breakfast provides one-fourth or more of the daily recommended levels for key nutrients (calories, protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, iron, and calcium) that children need for growth and development.

Myth: School meals don't offer enough fruits or vegetables.

Fact: In North Carolina, schools usually offer a number of fruit and vegetable selections each day. These may be fresh, canned, frozen or dried. There is an emphasis on dark green, deep yellow or orange fruits or vegetables, and items that are not fried. More legumes (peas and beans) are also being introduced.

Myth: Schools serve fried, greasy and sugary foods.

Fact: Schools may serve chicken biscuits, breakfast pizza, pancakes or French toast at times. However, because the meals are required to meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, they will be lower in fat, saturated fat, sodium (salt) and sugar. Foods are often baked, not fried, made with low fat or lean ingredients, and include whole grains, fruit or 100% juice, and low fat or fat free milk that make each meal balanced and nutritious.

Myth: What is served at schools is out of my control.

Fact: Become an advocate for school meals. Join your local School Health Advisory Council or school board, write a letter of support and voice what you think schools should offer students.