



How can OPAL help existing breakfast programs

OPAL can support organisations in ensuring that existing breakfast programs are supplying healthy breakfast choices to children and young people. OPAL can also support organisations in getting messages home to children and families about the importance of breakfast and the role parents can play in role modelling healthy breakfast habits from an early age.

OPAL is however unable to fund food for programs or the establishment of new breakfast programs.



OPAL can assist by:

- Working with you to implement small changes or develop a healthy breakfast program policy at your site
- Providing 'Peel, Pour, Pop' theme posters to display around your organisation
- Providing 'Peel, Pour, Pop' theme brochures to distribute to children and families
- Providing newsletter articles and other communication to promote the 'Peel, Pour, Pop' message
- Setting up healthy breakfast displays to highlight some fast, tasty breakfast ideas for children and families to have at home
- Setting up healthy breakfast tasting opportunities for children and families to encourage them to try new healthy breakfast choices.

The Red Cross and SA Health have created some useful fact sheets about establishing breakfast programs, including possible funding sources. For details, visit:

www.redcross.org.au/good-start-breakfast-club-fact-sheets.aspx

Talk to your Local OPAL Team about the healthy breakfast resources that are available or visit opal.sa.gov.au

A healthy brekky is easy as

Peel a banana **Pour** milk on cereal
Pop grainy bread in the toaster



Checklist for creating a healthier breakfast program

The importance of a healthy breakfast

The OPAL healthy breakfast theme focuses on encouraging children, young people and families to choose a nutritious breakfast everyday. A healthy breakfast provides a great start to the morning and helps kids' learning and concentration during the day. It also provides plenty of the vitamins and minerals our kids need for a healthy body.

Breakfast consumption is an indicator of a healthier lifestyle and better quality diet. Recent research indicates 80% of children eat something everyday, but some of these breakfast choices are unhealthy, with high sugar levels meaning children are missing an opportunity to get key nutrients into their day. There is also a link between skipping breakfast and an increased risk of being overweight, obese or having a higher BMI.



The role of breakfast programs

Breakfast programs are an important initiative offered by many schools and community organisations across South Australia. They provide an opportunity for children to share a healthy meal in a supervised environment and can enhance the health and wellbeing of children by providing essential daily nutrients when healthy breakfast foods are provided. Breakfast programs can also assist with social skills, independence in meal preparation and the development of relationships with staff, volunteers and other children.



OPAL is a joint program of Australian, State and Local Governments.

www.opal.sa.gov.au



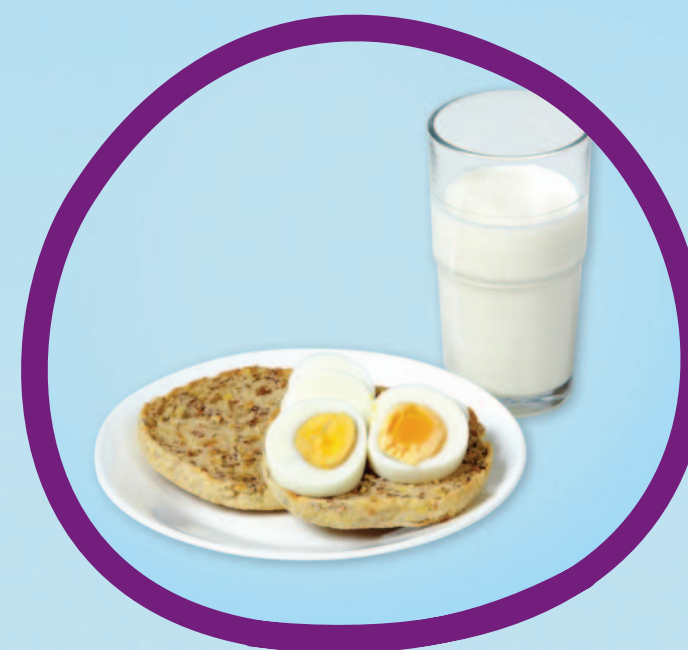
What does a healthy breakfast program look like?

The following checklist can be used to assess how healthy your breakfast program is and will provide ideas about healthier options.

Please tick the box for the sentences which apply to your centre.

Healthy foods our breakfast program encourages

- ☐ Healthy breakfast cereal choices such as those low in sugar, low in salt, high in fibre and containing wholegrains (see the OPAL healthy brekky brochure for suitable ideas)
- ☐ Breads that are high in fibre such as wholemeal or wholegrain choices
- ☐ Reduced fat dairy foods offered where age-appropriate[#] (i.e. reduced-fat milk, yoghurt and cheese for children over 2 years)
- ☐ When provided, cooked foods are prepared using healthy ingredients such as lean meats
- ☐ Any cooked foods such as eggs are prepared using healthy cooking methods (e.g. boiling, poaching, grilling)
- ☐ Vegetables and legumes such as baked beans, tomatoes, mushrooms, etc are offered where appropriate



- ☐ Fruit is available (fresh, frozen, tinned in natural juice or dried)
- ☐ Poly or monounsaturated margarine is offered as the preferred spread to be used sparingly on bread or toast
- ☐ Fresh water is offered as the main drink
- ☐ Plain reduced-fat milk[#] is also available in small serves (i.e. 1/2-1 cup per child)
- ☐ If smoothies are offered, they are made using reduced-fat milk[#] and yoghurt, plus fresh, frozen or tinned fruit in natural juice. Small serves are provided i.e. 1/2 -1 cup per child

Healthy behaviours our breakfast program encourages

- ☐ Children (and parents, where possible) are involved in preparing and cleaning up breakfast for themselves and others (i.e. setting the table and washing up dishes)
- ☐ Children are offered age-appropriate servings of healthy breakfast foods such as those recommended in the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating. For more information visit www.health.gov.au or ask your OPAL Team
- ☐ Eating breakfast at home and again at the breakfast program is discouraged, to prevent overeating
- ☐ Children are not offered unlimited helpings of breakfast foods

Choices that we leave out of our breakfast program

- ☐ Foods high in fat and/or sugar such as breakfast or muesli bars and sugary breakfast cereals
- ☐ Bakery products which are high in fat and/sugar such as pastries, cakes and donuts
- ☐ Full fat milk, full fat yoghurt and full fat cheese are not offered (unless children are under 2 years of age)

- ☐ Cooked foods high in fat and/or salt such as bacon and sausages
- ☐ Foods cooked in butter or deep fried
- ☐ Deep fried or high fat foods like hash browns
- ☐ Fruit juice or other 'fruit drinks'. These are not essential for children. If fruit juice is served, it is 100% juice (unsweetened) and limited to 1/2 cup per child and mixed with water
- ☐ Butter and chocolate spreads
- ☐ If 100% fruit spread/jam, vegemite, marmite, honey* or peanut butter⁺ are offered, children are encouraged to use them sparingly
- ☐ Sugary milk flavourings and syrups

[#] Full fat milk for under 2 year olds, reduced-fat for 2-5 year olds, reduced-fat or skim for over 5 year olds.

* Honey should not be given to children under 12 months of age as it contains bacteria that may be harmful to babies.

⁺ Depending on your site's nut policy.



Small changes can make a big difference

The health of children and young people in our communities is important and we can show that we value their health through offering healthy food choices at our programs. By making small changes to the breakfast choices that are available in your program, you are not only supporting the health of children but also role modelling this in the community. You can begin with one or two changes which may seem small, but can have a big impact on children's health (i.e. having a policy of only offering wholemeal or wholegrain bread and cereals choices).

As with any change process, it is important to work closely with all stakeholders as changes are implemented.

If your breakfast program is currently ticking all the healthy boxes, maybe you would like OPAL to support you in looking at the food offered in other programs at your site.

