

# Los Angeles Times

# HEALTH

**F**  
Medicine  
Fitness  
Nutrition  
Behavior

SEVN / OC

Monday, September 18, 2006

latimes.com/health

## Sleep, baby. But . . . where?

Despite suffocation dangers, the number of parents who sleep with their infants is growing.

By RONG-GONG LIN II  
Times Staff Writer

New mother Melissa Gluck knows that it's risky to sleep in the same bed with newborns.

But after seven sleepless weeks of rousing herself from bed every few hours to nurse her crying baby, she relented. "I was falling asleep nursing," says Gluck, 32, of La Cañada Flint-ridge. So she put Owen in bed with her. He slept longer between feedings, and she got more rest.

Then, several weeks ago, Gluck heard about a newborn's apparent suffocation in Torrance after sleeping with his teenage parents on the same bed — in a hospital, no less. That night, Owen was back in the bassinet.

In a matter of hours, though, he was again snuggled up near his mom, who says she was unable to sleep without his breath on her cheek.

"It's hard to decide what to do," Gluck said.

As in so many matters of child-rearing, the decision to bed share is a highly personal, often controversial, topic. It's also increasingly common.

[See *Bed sharing*, Page F8]

### Bed sharing

**Q & A:** Recommendations, precautions and when to avoid doing so. **Page F9**



MYUNG J. CHUN Los Angeles Times

**SPOT CHECK:** Clipboard in hand, Marcia Jeffries is ready for a round of gym inspections.

### BODYWORK

## On germ patrol at the gym

By JEANNINE STEIN  
Times Staff Writer

Gyms, in my book, should be clean. Not just somewhat kept up, but absolutely spotless. That's why I have no hesitation chasing down people who fail to wipe down their machine after sliming it with copious amounts of sweat or who leave the shower with questionable things floating atop the drain.

I've always felt alone in this fixation. Then I met Marcia Jeffries, an environmental health specialist with the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health, Recreational Health Program.

It's her job to make sure that gym locker rooms are mildew-free, pools are crystal clear, and saunas don't have anything scary growing in them (she also checks out pools and spas in

[See *Inspector*, Page F13]

# The breakfast hype

Whether eggs or a hearty bowl of oatmeal, it's long been branded the most important meal. Now some scientists are saying: Not so.

By ANDREAS VON BUBNOFF  
Special to The Times

**S**HELLEY RATTET of Framingham, Mass., has lost about 25 pounds these past few months. It was the first time the 55-year-old clinical psychologist had lost weight in 10 years.

One of the changes she made: Making sure that she ate a good breakfast.

Mark Mattson, a neuroscientist at the National Institute on Aging, disdains the morning repast. He hasn't eaten breakfast in 20 years, ever since he started running early in the mornings.

He says he's skinny and healthy and never felt better.

*Whatever you do, don't skip breakfast.*

*Breakfast: It's the most important meal of the day.*

Such pronouncements carry almost the aura of nutritional religion: carved in stone, not to be questioned. But a few nutritionists and scientists are questioning this conventional wisdom.

They're not challenging the practice of sending children off to school with some oat bran or eggs in their belly. They acknowledge the many studies reporting

[See *Breakfast*, Page F10]

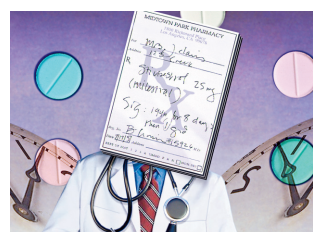


BÉATRICE DE GÉA Los Angeles Times

### CAPSULE

## Bench-press, but breathe

Holding your breath while lifting weights might raise risk of glaucoma. **Page 2**



### DOCTOR FILES

## A prescription in good faith

A doctor's compromise helps build trust with an anxious patient. **Page 3**

### FITNESS

## Energize the elliptical

Escape the monotony of cardio machines with unusual routines. **Page 4**



### ESOTERICA MEDICA

## Making a name for himself

Before Alzheimer's disease, there was a curious doctor, Alois Alzheimer. **Page 14**



# Breakfast helps fight flab, feeds the brain

[*Breakfast, from Page F1*] that children who eat breakfast get more of the nutrients they need and pay more attention in class.

They do say, however, that the case for breakfast's benefits is far from airtight — especially for adults, many of whom, if anything, could stand skipping a meal.

"For adults, I think the evidence is mixed," says Marion Nestle, professor of nutrition, food studies and public health at New York University who hasn't eaten breakfast in years because she is just not hungry in the morning.

"I am well aware that everyone says breakfast is the most important meal of the day, but I am not convinced," Nestle wrote in her book, "What to Eat." (She later received many e-mails from readers telling her that they were relieved to hear it.) "What you eat — and how much — matters more to your health than when you eat."

A few scientists go further than this. They say it may be more healthful for adults to skip breakfast, as long as they eat carefully the rest of the day.

"No clear evidence shows that the skipping of breakfast or lunch (or both) is unhealthy, and animal data suggest quite the opposite," wrote Mattson, possibly the ultimate anti-breakfast iconoclast, last year in the medical journal the *Lancet*. Advice to eat smaller and more frequent meals, he wrote, "is given despite the lack of clear scientific evidence to justify it."

Mattson admits that he hasn't proven his case yet. His studies are still preliminary.

But already, his findings have attracted a cadre of followers who started to skip breakfast once they heard of his results. Meanwhile, a diet plan that involves breakfast skipping — the Warrior Diet — is attracting followers in the U.S. and worldwide.

These aren't the only ones forgoing the morning repast, of course. Surveys show that about one-third of all people in the U.S. and Europe skip breakfast, primarily because they say they don't have enough time in the morning or because they want to lose weight — and what better way to do so than miss a meal?

Most nutritionists and health experts maintain that this is unwise. Breakfast skippers, they say, risk skimping on important nutrients. They also tend to binge later on, actually increasing their risk of gaining weight.

"There isn't any downside to eating a healthy breakfast," says registered dietitian Joan Salge Blake, a clinical assistant professor at Boston University who specializes in weight management. "Currently, Americans, on average, fall short on their daily servings of whole grains, fruits and dairy foods. Eating breakfast is an excellent way to add these foods to the diet."

## Breaking the 'fast'

Wherever and whenever the concept was first invented, breakfast today is enjoyed by cultures around the world: coffee with French bread and butter and jam in Algeria; soup and rice



LUIS SINCO Los Angeles Times

**BENEFIT:** A breakfast of whole grains, such as oatmeal, and fresh fruits can help reach the recommended daily intake of vitamins and minerals of which, on average, Americans fall short.

porridge in Thailand and Vietnam; stuffed steamed buns and soy milk in northern China; a heart-stopping plate of bacon, eggs, sausages and fried bread in the British Isles.

Breakfast cereals are relatively modern additions, debuting after the invention of "granula" by Dr. James Jackson in 1863, and cornflakes by Dr. John Harvey Kellogg in 1902.

It makes sense that the body would want to refuel after many hours of fasting, says Susan Bowerman, a registered dietitian and assistant director at the UCLA Center for Human Nutrition. In the morning, blood glucose level is generally low. "Since the brain's primary source of fuel is glucose," Bowerman says, "it seems logical that fueling up in the morning ... would make sense."

Refueling is not the only benefit, however. "Many of the foods that people consume at breakfast are things they may not consume the rest of the day," such as dairy products, fruits and whole grains, Bowerman says.

Foods generally served at breakfast are good sources of calcium (from milk, yogurt and cheese), fibers (from whole fruits, whole wheat bread and cereal), iron (from fortified breakfast cereals or whole grain breads), and vitamin C or A (from orange juice and fortified milk, respectively).

"If you skip that meal, you will make up for those calories later in the day," Salge Blake says. "But are you going to be reaching for high fiber cereal or nonfat milk that's rich in vitamin D and calcium? Probably not."

Science appears to support this concern. A number of studies find nutrient shortfalls in adult breakfast skippers, says Gail Rampersaud, a registered dietitian at the University of



SPENCER WEINER Los Angeles Times

**STARTING OUT:** Eggs, traditional breakfast fare in the United States, may not be eaten at meals for the rest of the day.

Florida in Gainesville. One study reported this year of almost 16,000 adults 20 years or older found (based on the subjects' own reports of what they ate) that those who don't eat breakfast get fewer micronutrients, including folic acid, vitamin C, calcium, magnesium, iron, potassium and fiber.

Another 1998 study of 504 young adults in Bogalusa, La., reported that breakfast skippers were less likely to meet two-thirds of the recommended dietary intake for many vitamins and minerals, including vitamins D and C, and calcium.

Research also suggests that skipping breakfast could backfire on anyone who's doing it to stay, or become, slim. "The preponderance of studies suggest that breakfast skipping is associated with greater risk of being overweight," says Michael Murphy, a child psychologist at Massachusetts General Hospital and an associate professor at Harvard Medical School.

For example, a 2003 study of

more than 10,000 Finnish adolescents and parents showed that both adults and adolescent skippers are significantly more likely to become overweight or obese. Another, 2002 study of 499 adults found a four-fold increased risk of obesity for those who reported skipping breakfast 25% of the time.

And a 2003 study of more than 16,000 U.S. adults reported that, on average, breakfast skippers had higher body mass indexes than people eating cereal or bread for breakfast.

The reason could be that people who skip breakfast make up for that calorie shortfall later — with a vengeance. John de Castro, a psychologist formerly at the University of Texas at El Paso, analyzed seven-day food diaries from about 900 adults and found that people who consume most of their calories later in the day tend to eat more on that day. And a 2003 study of more than 1,200 Swedish adolescents found that breakfast skippers were more likely to get their

energy from snack food.

"If people skip breakfast, they will hunt around in the office, and the food they sometimes choose will be more energy dense and not nutrient dense," says Salge Blake, who advises obese clients to introduce breakfast into their diets.

This tip resonates with Shelley Rattet, who is one of Salge Blake's clients.

"I didn't eat breakfast because I was trying to lose weight," Rattet recalls. "But at night I was starving, so I ate whatever tasted good, for example, potato chips, a piece of cake or popcorn."

Breakfast may help prevent chronic disease, says Dr. Walter Willett, chair of the department of nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health. That's because more frequent smaller meals (including breakfast) are less likely to produce high peaks of glucose and insulin in the blood, which in the long-run can damage the pancreas and increase diabetes risk.

"Spreading out caloric intake, rather than having a few large meals, leads to a better metabolic profile," Willett says.

And breakfast fuels the brain, helping it perform better, says David Benton, a professor in the department of psychology at Swansea University in Wales. In a 1998 study of 137 women and 47 men, Benton found that students who routinely skipped breakfast (including on the morning of a test) recalled fewer words than people who had had breakfast. Their performance improved when they were given a glucose drink.

## Shaky science

Given this mound of pro-breakfast data, what could there be to challenge?

Breakfast skeptics point out that the results of studies that support eating breakfast are mixed, and often not solid enough to draw definitive conclusions.

Many who think breakfast is healthful are quick to acknowledge the shortfalls in the science as well.

To start with, some studies don't find a clear relationship between skipping breakfast and obesity. For example, a 12-week clinical trial published in 1992, in which 52 obese women received a reduced-calorie diet, did not find a significant difference in weight loss between a group who skipped breakfast and a group who ate three meals a day.

And even in cases in which effects are observed, studies often depend on data that may be unreliable, such as self-reported diets. "I am not always sure that what people report is what they actually do," says David Levitsky, professor of nutrition and psychology at Cornell University.

Cause and effect is also hard to prove, making it possible that the relationship between body weight and breakfast is spurious.

For example, a 2005 study by Ruth Striegel-Moore, a professor of psychology at Wesleyan University, followed about 2,400 adolescent girls for nine years. She found that girls who ate breakfast more consistently had a

lower body mass index.

But the association between skipping breakfast and being overweight went away when the researchers accounted for other factors that differed among the girls, such as overall energy intake, physical activity levels and parental education.

"My personal view is that breakfast skipping probably doesn't cause health-compromising behavior," says Dr. Anna Keski-Rahkonen, an epidemiologist at the University of Helsinki, Finland, author of the study of Finnish adolescents and their parents. "It's probably really a good indicator of a more unhealthy lifestyle."

Indeed, the committee of scientists who advised the government in crafting its 2005 dietary guidelines concluded that there's insufficient evidence to say breakfast helps people manage their body weight, says Dr. Carlos Camargo, an associate professor of epidemiology at the Harvard School of Public Health, who served on that committee. (The committee did conclude, however, that there was nothing wrong with eating breakfast — it wouldn't make you fatter — and that skipping it could lower the nutritional quality of the diet.)

## Case for skipping

A few researchers would go further than saying breakfast is no great shakes. They'd say avoiding it may even be healthy.

Take dieting. "If you look at the first change that dieters make in their habits, it's [dropping] breakfast," Levitsky says. He thinks they are on the right track. "They know more than the scientists," he says.

Unconvinced by the skip-breakfast-get-fat connection, Levitsky set out to test it in his lab. In a still unpublished study, he had undergraduate students eat well-defined meals under controlled conditions — including an all-you-can-eat breakfast some days and no breakfast on others. Both groups could eat as much as they wanted for the rest of the day.

The skippers, Levitsky found, ate about 150 more calories at lunch — but no extra calories for the rest of the day. As a result, they ate 450 fewer calories.


"If you skip breakfast twice a week, that's about 1000 calories less," Levitsky says — enough, over time, to make a significant difference in one's weight.

Mattson, of the National Institute on Aging, has done similar research, except he asked people to skip not only breakfast, but lunch as well. In a still unpublished study, he enrolled 20 normal-weight adult men and women, then instructed half of them to skip all meals except dinner. They were told to try to eat the same amount of calories.

None of the people on one meal a day ate more than those on three meals, he says. At the end of two months, those who were on one meal a day hadn't gained, or lost, any weight — although he suspects that they would have lost weight, if left to their own devices, because they found it difficult to eat all their

[See *Breakfast*, Page F11]

## FREE Glucose and A1C Screening and Seminar on *Diabetes Self-Management*



**The Diabetes Care Center, Centinela Freeman Regional Medical Center, Marina Campus has been Recognized by the American Diabetes Association for Quality Self-Management Education\*.**

Uncontrolled diabetes causes many serious physical complications--and you may have diabetes without even knowing it. Attend this free event:

- \* Learn about this disease and how to control it
- \* Find out if you are at risk with a free glucose test
- \* If you have diabetes, find out if it is in control with a free A1C test


**Wednesday, September 20, 2006**

6:30 pm Registration • 7:00-8:00 pm Lecture & Screening

Diabetes Care Center  
4644 Lincoln Blvd., Marina del Rey, CA 90292

Speaker: Dr. Etie Moghissi, Medical Director, Diabetes Care Center  
Hosted Self-Parking/Light Refreshments

**Reservations Required: 877-237-6266**



\*The American Diabetes Association Recognizes this education service as meeting the National Standards for Diabetes Self-Management Education.



[www.centinelafreeman.com](http://www.centinelafreeman.com)

ADVERTISEMENT

## New Hope For Back Pain & Disc Herniation Sufferers

A new free report has recently been released that reveals an amazing new medical breakthrough research has proven 86% successful treating debilitating back pain. Even with multiple herniated discs. Find out how space travel solved astronauts back pain and how this accidental discovery has lead to the most promising back pain treatment today. For your free report entitled "How Space Age Technology Is Solving Back Pain Without Drugs Or Surgery!" call 1-800-799-5447 and listen to the toll-free 24 hour recorded message for the details or go to: [www.endmydiscpain.com](http://www.endmydiscpain.com).

## Reshape your body in about 1 hour with Liposculpture

>> Nearly Pain Free


>> Only Local Anesthesia

>> No Stitches


>> No Unsightly Scars

>> Drive Yourself Home


>> Permanent Results




Arms Before



After - \$3400



Chin Before



After - \$2400

**All Inclusive Pricing No Additional Fees**

Abdomen \$3600  
Abdomen & Love Handles \$4600  
Inner or Outer Thighs \$2800  
Inner & Outer Thighs \$3800  
Chin/Neck \$2400  
Arms \$3400  
Arms and Bra Roll on Back \$4400  
Male Breasts \$3400  
More Prices on Our Website

**Dr. Alan Bittner**  
Board Certified  
Liposculpture Surgeon  
310-775-5515  
Beverly Hills  
[www.dralanbittner.com](http://www.dralanbittner.com)



# Are you in or out of breakfast club?

[Breakfast, from Page F10]  
allotted calories.

They also had more muscle compared with fat, showed signs of boosted immune responses, and didn't have higher blood insulin levels, as some scientists fear could result. But they did have higher cholesterol levels.

Mattson has also conducted "intermittent fasting" studies, as he terms them, on rodents. He's reported that animals deprived of food every other day have lower blood pressure and heart rate, lower insulin levels and an improved removal of glucose from the blood — all good things.

He would be the first to admit that neither his human or animal studies are quite analogous to just skipping one's morning meal. But, he adds, "My own gut feeling is that when the inter-meal interval is increased — whether through intermittent fasting or skipping breakfast — that will result in qualitatively similar beneficial effects."

Rodent studies are also invoked by another scientist in support of skipping breakfast. Tamas Horvath, a veterinarian and neuroscientist at Yale University, says he has evidence from mice that hunger makes them smarter. He notes that both hungry mice and hungry people have higher blood levels of a hormone called ghrelin, which is released from an empty stomach, signaling hunger to the body. In a study published this year, he found that mice engineered to lack the ghrelin gene took longer to learn how to avoid electric shocks in a maze-running task.

"It has been known for hundreds of years that for an animal to perform, you need to food deprive them," Horvath says. "Who invented breakfast? It was a social thing. Most animals don't have breakfast, lunch and dinner."

In exploring the breakfast issue, some scientists have even experimented on themselves. For Seth Roberts, a professor of psychology at UC Berkeley, years of self experimentation, changing one thing at a time and meticulously recording the effects, showed him that he tended to wake up several hours before breakfast. The effect, called "anticipatory activity," has been known in animals for decades, he says.

So he cut out breakfast. And now he sleeps much better.

"People get it exactly wrong," he says. "Breakfast is the most important meal to avoid."

Pro-breakfast researchers and dietitians are not too impressed by such findings. They note that animal studies may not apply to human beings, and as-yet-unpublished trials on people have not yet passed the test of critical peer review.

The case against breakfast is "based on bad science and spurious assumptions," says Murphy of Harvard.

"Don't throw out breakfast because of a few animal studies," he says. "Even for adults, the evidence is strong."

Many breakfast advocates also say there's a need for better studies — such as formal clinical trials — to study the role of breakfast in promoting good health. But this doesn't mean, they add, that the data for the traditional morning meal aren't pretty persuasive already.

"I totally agree that we need more research," say Striegel-Moore of Wesleyan. "But if pinned to the wall, I would say

that breakfast skipping is bad. Is the evidence bulletproof? No. It's like climate change. We haven't experimentally manipulated the Earth, but we have got a lot of evidence."

It is not clear that major, federal money will ever be thrown at settling the breakfast dilemma. In the meantime, anyone who wants to skip it but is worried about those shortfalls in vitamins and minerals can take a handy tip from Mattson.

"Eat breakfast at lunch," he says.

## Start your day with good stuff

By ANDREAS VON BUBNOFF  
Special to The Times

If you're going to eat breakfast, what should you eat? Nutritionists and health experts don't have bear claws or Froot Loops in mind. They generally recommend foods that release their energy slowly and keep the body satisfied for a long time — ones rich in fiber (whole grains, for example) or protein. Most of these experts also recommend milk or other dairy products and fruits.

Breakfast "is the easiest time to eat nutritious food without any effort," says Barbara Rolls, professor and chair of nutritional sciences at Penn State University. "It takes so little time to pour yourself a bowl of cereal" — of the right kind, of course.

■ **Get some fiber.** Studies show that high-fiber breakfasts leave people less hungry for longer stretches of the day. A 2001 analysis of about a dozen studies reported that when people consumed an extra 14 grams per day of fiber (compared with the 15 grams daily that Americans generally eat) after two days they consumed, on average, 10% fewer calories — and lost an average of 4.2 pounds over about four months. Rolls recommends cereal containing as much fiber as you find palatable: "In the winter, I have oatmeal and add extra brans to bump up the fiber," she says.

(Another reason to add fiber: The American Heart Assn. recommends adults eat 25 to 30 grams a day.)

■ **Bulk your food.** Rolls recommends eating cereal with low-fat milk and adding fruits not only for their nutrients but also to bulk it up without adding lots of calories. Studies show that increasing the volume that way helps people stay satisfied and eat less.

Her own preference is to use nonfat yogurt instead of milk. "That makes it more substantial," she says. Studies show that people feel they've eaten more if a food feels thicker. A 2001 study of 84 adults found that they were less hungry a few hours after being served drinks artificially thickened to make the texture more viscous.

■ **Get more protein.** That's the top choice for Susan Bowerman, a registered dietitian and assistant director at the UCLA Center for Human Nutrition.

Studies suggest that protein-rich diets are satisfying, leading people to consume fewer calories. One 2005 study in 19 adults showed that a 12-week diet consisting of 30% protein reduced energy intake for the rest of the day by about 440 calories compared with a diet with 15% protein.

Bowerman recommends a shake of milk or soy milk, with whey protein powder added. (Other options are nonfat cottage cheese, yogurt or an egg white omelet.) She recommends fruits on the side and whole grains from cereal, toast or a muffin.

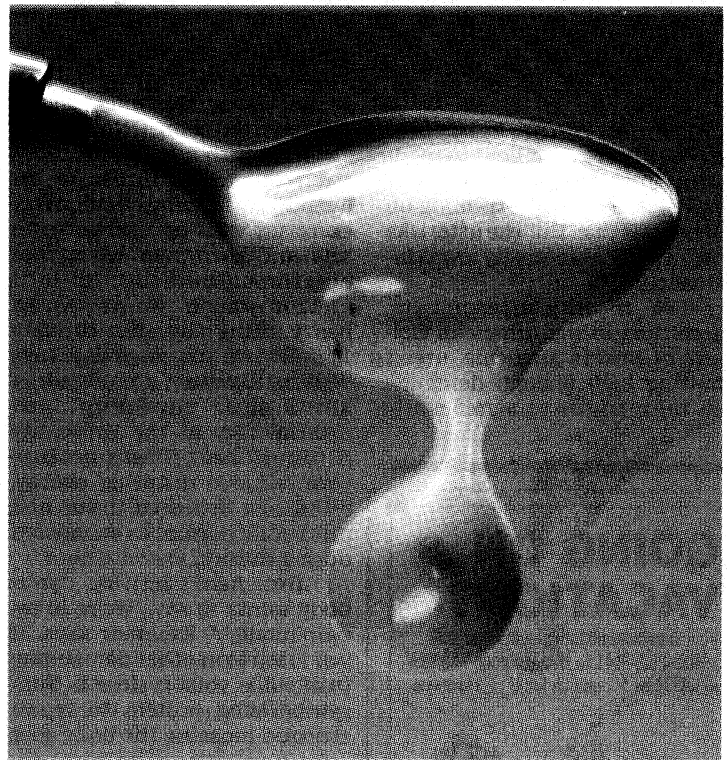
One sample breakfast: cottage cheese or yogurt topped with whole grain granola and fruit.

■ **Go easy on sugar and refined grains.** That's what David Benton, a psychology professor at Swansea University in Wales, advises. Eat foods that release energy slowly — such as an egg, oats or bran flakes — but not corn flakes.

The reason? Staying sharp mentally. In a 2003 study with 106 female undergraduate students, Benton found that a breakfast that releases glucose more slowly resulted in better recall of words after a few hours. This is probably because protein and fiber in these more complex foods slows down the release of glucose, avoiding rushes and crashes in blood sugar and insulin levels.

Avoiding glucose and insulin spikes could also be why eating whole grains is associated with lower weight and lower mortality, says Dr. Walter Willett, chair of the department of nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health.

A 2003 study of more than 86,000 male physicians found that after 5.5 years, the ones who ate whole grain cereals at least once a day were 17% less likely to die of cardiovascular diseases than those who rarely or never ate cereal. The cereal-eaters were also 22% less likely to be overweight eight years later.



BRYAN CHAN Los Angeles Times

**BALANCED:** Yogurt is a good source of calcium and protein. Mix in whole grain granola to also make it a fiber-rich breakfast.



# Essential food for young minds

Kids who regularly eat breakfast appear to get the nutrients they need and do better in school.

By ANDREAS VON BUBNOFF  
*Special to The Times*

Whatever their opinion on the importance of breakfast for adults, nutrition researchers and health experts are united on one point: Kids should eat breakfast. Children are still growing, so their need for energy and nutrients is more critical.

"The research overwhelmingly shows that there appear to be many more benefits to eating breakfast than any negative consequences," says Gail Rampersaud, a dietitian at the University of Florida in Gainesville who recently analyzed 47 studies published between 1970 and 2004 on the health effects of breakfast (or skipping it) on children.

Among the findings:

Many studies — although not all — suggest that skipping breakfast may have ill effects on the cognitive function of children, especially on their memory.

For example, a study of 180 Spanish children ages 9 to 13 found that those who said they ate an adequate breakfast (meaning more than 20% of the daily energy intake) over the course of one week performed better on a standardized test.

Another study, still unpublished, on 4,000 elementary schoolchildren in the United States, found that breakfast-skipping was associated with poor performance on a test in which children had to remember numbers or list the names of animals. It also found that those who skipped breakfast were

more likely to be tardy or absent from school, and in poorer health.

Studies have also reported that the introduction of a school breakfast program led to better math grades, as well as reduced absences and tardiness.

In addition to the effects on children's mind, children who don't get breakfast risk losing out on adequate intake of vitamins A and C, calcium and iron, according to about a dozen studies. Breakfast, Rampersaud says, is "an opportunity to get whole grains, fruits and dairy products."

About another dozen studies suggest that children and ado-

lescents who skip breakfast are more likely to be overweight. Still, Rampersaud cautions, these studies are preliminary: More carefully designed trials are needed to confirm this observation, she says.

Despite this evidence, even children as young as 4 years old are not always fed breakfast by their parents.

A recent study of 1,500 4-year-olds in the province of Quebec in Canada found that 10% of them didn't get breakfast every day.

In the United States, it's estimated that 8% of children age 6 to 11 skip breakfast, with the number climbing to 25% in 12- to 19-year-olds.