NAME..... DATE.....

TEST READINESS—BREAKFAST

What would you think if your teacher told you to get ready for a big test by eating breakfast? It might sound silly, but research suggests that breakfast is important for school success.

Did you know that your brain needs energy in order to work? Much like muscles need energy to move, the brain needs energy too. When you wake up in the morning, you haven't had anything to eat since the night before. If you want your brain to work well, you must eat food to give it energy.

The brain runs best on an energy called "glycogen." This is a carbohydrate stored by the body and used by the brain and muscles for energy. Glycogen lasts in your body only a few hours. If you skip breakfast, there won't be enough glycogen left over from the night before for your brain to do its best work.

Many studies have shown how important breakfast is to learning. Many schools now have a free breakfast program for students so all kids can be successful learners. Research shows that student math and reading test scores improve each year if a school offers a breakfast program. More than 100 studies of breakfast programs have shown that students learn better when they start the day with a meal. Breakfast improves the ability to think. It also enhances student memory, helps kids pay attention better and improves mood.

What kind of breakfast is best? A good way to give your brain glycogen is to eat low-fat whole grains with some protein. Whole-grain cereal, toast or oatmeal are good breakfast choices. Add some protein like nuts, peanut butter, milk, yogurt, cheese or eggs. Add some fruit for natural sweetness. Avoid high-sugar foods, because the energy they give you doesn't last long enough.

Do you power up your brain with breakfast each day? How do you think eating breakfast might help you be ready to take a test? What do you think might happen to test scores if you and all your classmates ate breakfast?

»Discuss, Record and Share:

1. What does breakfast do to the brain?
2. List examples from the text showing how breakfast helps learning.
3. Which breakfast foods improve brain energy?
4. Using what you you've just read about breakfast and learning, how might eating breakfast in the morning before a test help you get a better score?

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