



BREAKFAST TRANSITION TO REAL FOOD

So, for the next couple of days, we're talking breakfast and opening up conversations around why things are changing, for those of us who have kids old enough to notice change at the table. Let's start with breakfast...

After a rejuvenating night's sleep, the simple act of 'breaking the fast' is a crucial part of the upcoming day. It's what our children eat at breakfast which provides the fuel to give them sustained energy, stabilise blood sugar, put a spring in their step and a smile on their dial. And the good news is that it can be nutritious, delicious and easy!

As parents of children – especially the ones who attend day care or school, it really is the prime time to feed their bodies what they need with beautiful nourishing real foods that comprise protein, fats and carbohydrates. A common complaint from client we see is that their kids don't eat their lunch at school, choosing well-earned play time before the bell snaps them back to the classroom. Just another good reason to ensure we are feeding our kids a well-balanced meal at breakfast to guarantee them long-lasting energy, clarity and focus for the day. Not to sound too dramatic here, but surely to resonate with a few of you out there – it may well be the one chance you have to 'get it into them'.

What does the average family eat for breakfast? Box cereal.

Why? Because food companies said so. True story. Box cereal is a profit game. It's genius. It's cheap. It's transportable all over the world and allows for global market growth. It lasts ages on the shelf. It makes people hungry for more food an hour or two later, so they have a whole other occasion to sell to: SNACKS. There's just one problem... mentally and physically, they're just about the least best option that exists (some worse than others, of course) to fuel you for your day.

The modern cereal... while some are better than others of course, here's a snapshot.

- **Highly processed.** To make the flakes, shapes and puffs, the grains have to be heated up to very high temperatures and extruded at high pressures, which then leaves them devoid of nutrition. The shapes are then sprayed with oil and sugar, which help to maintain the crunchiness even when milk is added. So, all the processing not only destroys any existing nutrients in the grains but also cause the oils to become rancid and renders certain proteins in the food, toxic.



- **Loaded with sugar.** Often up to 30-40%, which puts them on the sugar rollercoaster by raising blood sugar levels very quickly, and whatever goes up, must come down, leaving them searching for more sugar and so it goes...
- **Difficult to digest** because the grains have been so denatured and improperly prepared, which leads to the next point.
- Because of that improper grain preparation (grains should be soaked and either fermented, sprouted or gently cooked to be more digestible), they contain **phytic acid** found in quick-processed grains and nuts – it's an acid that binds up nutrients (like calcium, magnesium, iron and zinc) making it difficult for your body to absorb them. Phytic acid also inhibits enzymes that we need to digest our food.
- They often contain **artificial colours, flavours and preservatives**, which can cause all sorts of side effects in our kids, including headaches, migraines, rashes, stomach aches, illness, restlessness, sleeplessness, irritability and more.

The combination of all of these issues with these 'pseudo-foods' can lead to specific **health issues** like tooth decay, poor bone growth, rickets, anaemia, bloating, constipation, IBS, allergies, infections, osteoporosis, concentration issues and can also contribute to weight gain, obesity, compromised metabolism and more.

Real life examples

Why don't we look at 2 top-selling breakfast products' ingredients to give us the final motivation you might need to start steering the breakfast ship in a different direction.

Typical ingredients in a popular breakfast drink (chocolate flavour)

(Holds 99% of the liquid breakfast market and fuels early morning starts for young and old:

Filtered water, skim **milk powder**, cane sugar, **wheat maltodextrin**, **soy protein**, vegetable oils (**sunflower**, canola), inulin, hi-maize™ starch, corn syrup solids, **fructose**, **cocoa** (0.5%), oat flour, mineral (calcium), food acid (332), flavours, vegetable gums (460, 466, 407), stabilizer (452), salt, vitamins (C, **niacin**, A, ...)

Why it's not great for our kids:

- It's very highly processed.
- Maltodextrin comes from wheat starch and is used for thickening or to improve texture and has such a high GI that it pretty much behaves the same way as pure glucose on metabolism in that it's absorbed so rapidly by the body. Note, there are three other thickeners used in this breakfast drink.
- And yep, three different types of sugars are in this product, too. Can you spot them?



- It's made from dried skim milk powder instead of whole milk.
- It includes imported ingredients like corn syrup and soy protein, which are not only highly processed, but from GMO (genetically modified) crops.
- We could go on, but you get the picture...

Typical ingredients in a popular breakfast cereal

(Particularly marketed to adolescent and teen boys.)

Cereals (44% (wheat flour, oatmeal, maize flour), sugar, wheat, gluten, molasses, salt, mineral (calcium carbonate, iron), barley malt extract, mineral salt (sodium bicarbonate), natural colour (paprika, turmeric), vitamins (C, niacin, thiamine, riboflavin, B6, folate)

Why it's not great for our kids:

- 1/3 of this product is sugar (and, again, it appears 3 times).
- Excessive sugar and salt.
- Low in fibre.
- Low in protein.
- Even though they have added vitamins in, the cereal grain itself contains phytic acid, which binds to the vitamins and prevents us from absorbing them. On top of that, calcium carbonate is one of the least absorbable forms of calcium available and they don't disclose what type of iron is added.

In our time-poor existence, we are constantly rushing to get the kids to school so that we can get to work on time, and we reach for what is convenient (or what we're told by marketing is convenient), in the forms of boxed cereal, vegemite on toast, breakfast bars or breakfast drinks. But, with a bit of preparation and the right ingredients in your kitchen, the family could be enjoying yummy, nutrient-dense morning meals, and still get out the door on time.



So any breakfast cereals are marketed as health foods. Little wonder it's the main form of breakfast for most families. We're far too trusting, assuming it must be good because that is what the advertisements say. Choice believes that cereals aimed at kids can be amongst the worst for nutrition.



According to NY times best-selling author, Dr. Mercola:

“The unfortunate reality is that the cereals aggressively marketed to kids have the worst nutritional quality of all cereals. An analysis, published in the [Journal of American Dietetic Association](#) found that children’s cereals have more sugar, sodium, carbohydrates and calories per gram than cereals not marketed to kids. They also have less protein and fibre.”



Here are some scrumptious real food breakfast alternatives for you to try, many of which you’ll find our meal plans over our time together:

- Bircher Muesli
- Smoothies
- Eggs
- French Toast
- Fruit and yoghurt parfait
- Poached Eggs in Broth
- Banana Bread
- Leftovers, whether that be soup, savoury muffins. Brenda’s kids are partial to leftover Bolognese on sourdough toast, or turning leftover rice into a porridge with berries and coconut milk.
- Chia Pudding
- Sausages with Fried Veggies
- Sweet Potato Hash
- Fried haloumi on olive sourdough
- Homemade granola



- Homemade muesli
- Breakfast egg muffins
- Pancakes with whipped cream
- Omelette



Now, we know what some of you might be thinking... 'What! I have to cook a whole other meal???'

Sometimes yes, sometimes no. Often between reheating leftovers, or baking something like a banana bread that can be used topped with butter one morning and then in a school lunch box for morning tea the next... These are efforts you would have made or you are making already for other things, or to put towards future snacks of meals.

Check-in with our reason for doing this in the first place:

- Happy kids
- Energetic kids
- Mentally settled
- More able to focus for longer periods of time
- Preventative for their immune systems. Well nourished = higher immune defence.
- Less money and time spent on making, buying and preparing snacks.

All pretty powerful reasons to get this breakfast thing happening properly, right?





Practical work suggestions: Breakfast

- Start to phase out breakfast cereals by simply introducing some of the real breakfasts instead. Start with once or twice a week option for the fussier families, and then progress from there. Don't talk about it, don't make it a big deal that it's different for now, until they ask about it.

A Stealth Tip: *If you lecture or tell your kids or make grand announcements that things are 'changing around here', it can easily be met with resistance if your family has been used to processed cereals or white bread-and-spread type breakfasts. We suggest you just implement a couple of new breakfasts this week, no fuss or commentary and wait for them to ask questions about what you've provided. When a question naturally arises from them, this provides you with an invitation to SHARE rather than have kids feel like they've been doing something wrong, especially teenagers and fussy eaters. So, once asked, you can share your reasons for introducing new breakfast offerings.*

- Once the conversation is open: start talking about what you've learnt is in breakfast cereals lately, and that it's not helping them have lots of energy to play, be strong, have clear skin and feel clever (this will be easier after you've seen a few of the experts in action during our interviews). You will be so surprised to see how when we let kids into the conversation instead of just telling them, "No, you can't have that," they are very logical and the younger they are, the more sponge-like they are.



- Get them on board by given them the option to be a part of the meal planning or making of breakfast. Suggest a couple of options from the list you think they might like and if there's time, get them to lend a hand. Here are our favourite simple ways to get little and big kids involved:
 1. Whisking the eggs for scrambled eggs.
 2. Pulling things out of the fridge or pantry (especially lovely for the under 6's to feel clever in spotting where things are).
 3. Scraping some butter on some sourdough.
 4. Dipping the bread into the French toast mixture.
 5. Sprinkling cheese on sourdough for cheesy melts.
 6. Mix the batter for a slice.
 7. Make the Bircher or chia pots the night before.
 8. Cut the fruit with a kiddy cutter. (Check them out [here](#)).
 9. Wash the spinach.
 10. Break up the mushrooms for frying.
 11. Mix the cubes of veggies into a frittata.
 12. Take out leftover sausages and cut with the kiddy cutter (or regular knife if bigger).
 13. Read out the recipe while the other sibling measures and takes turns doing so.
 14. Scoop and squish the avocado.
 15. Older kids can make breakfast while you get stuck into lunch boxes.



Now a little more on transitioning your meals

If you have babies or really little ones, you won't have as hard a time of it. The joy is, they'll never know any different. In fact, because everything in the land of real food is so delicious, you may not have a hard time of it at all regardless of the age of your child. BUT, in the interest of being prepared, we want to share these tips on answering questions from your possibly suspicious crew as you transition more real food breakfasts into the mix. They may just come in handy if you meet with these sorts of questions, refusals or resistance.

Question: "Where's my cereal?"

Answer: "I thought I'd do something new and yummy for us instead. How crunchy is this capsicum, hey?" (Keeping light and drawing focus to a positive crowd-pleasing element is a great way to make the new foods / dishes fun.)

Question: "Why can't I have cereal anymore?"

Answer: "It's not that you can't, sweetie, you can have anything you want. It's just that Mummy's been doing a course learning about real food and, well, it turns out the cereal companies have been tricksters and told us lies about their cereal being a good way to start the day. Do you want me to show you how we can tell when we look at the label, so you can be a good detective too?"

Question: "Why can't I have a muffin anymore?"

Answer: "It's not that you can't, it's just that these ones are super high in sugar. If we want to feel strong and clever, have shiny hair and clear up our skin, then this type of muffin is going to make it hard. Do you want me to show you how I know?"

Question: "Can I have something else for breakfast?"

Answer: "There is nothing else."

(Plan B'ing is dangerous ground for currency and bribe and bartering from kids and parents alike. But, when offering the breakfast, do remember to always have something nutritious on the plate you know they will eat, so there's something familiar as well as something new, and a little insurance there...)



Final tips when transitioning for today

- **Don't** offer a Plan B meal. It will be hard, but you will achieve results faster. The key as you'll hear our expert Shalani talk about in a couple of days, is that this isn't done in a fussy or dramatic way. Simply say, "Oh, that's a shame. It's so yummy. Is there any part that you will eat? No? No, there's nothing else. Leave the table and go and play, or get ready for school, but no, I haven't got anything else for you."
- **Don't** give kids under 4 a choice of products, only produce. I.e. Don't say to little Jane, "What do you want sweetie, choose something" when you're in front of a wall of packets of processed carbs. Better is to get them to help make a 'produce' decision.
- **Do** let them choose produce. "Would you like to pick 3 vegetables, Jackson? You can be in charge of the family's veggie choice tonight, how exciting! What are you going to choose? Something crunchy? Something soft?" or "Mary, would you like to choose something purple and something orange for the trolley from all the veggies?"
- **Do** affirm positive choices. At breakfast the next morning if it was a bit of produce they picked, affirm their great taste in veggies / fruit / bacon etc. "Oh wow, great choice, Sienna. These carrots are super crunchy and sweet. Thanks." Let them feel proud to have brought them to the table.
- **Do** explain in full, don't just say, "No, you can't have that." Whip out something like a Chemical Maze book or app to help you teach your kids what's in so many products and why it might not be a great choice after all. Include yourself in the 'not knowing' it was bad. It's more powerful and we then avoid blaming them, as it was our money that purchased the cereal in the first place.



Breakfast Homework:

Introduce a new breakfast this next couple of days – something off the radar. Ask the child to help by fetching ingredients, chopping, squishing or even plating up (for older kids), and describe what you're making and why you're excited. Confirm they've done a great job and then at the breakfast table, affirm their wonderful help in the kitchen. We tend to save getting kids in the kitchen for when it's cake time. Get them in there and as excited about savoury simple breakfasts and dinners too.



We cover fussy eating specifically in a lot more detail down the track. Today is just about arming you with not only some delicious breakfast ideas, but also some conversational tools to start working on objections of hesitations as you transition into whole food breakfasts.

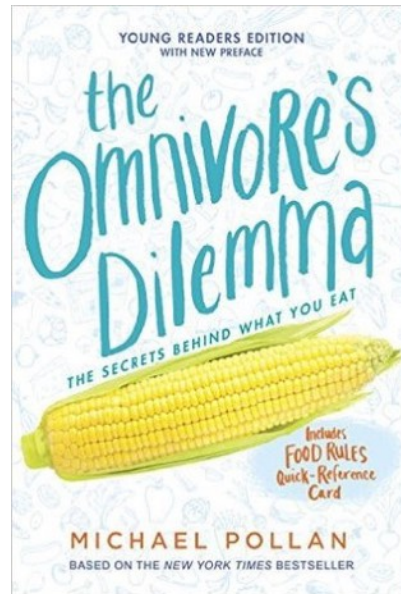
See you over on FB to discuss breakfast and introducing real foods with the path of least resistance.

Alexx and Brenda x



Books to enjoy and read with your kids, or have your kids read themselves:

Michael Pollan – ‘[An Omnivore’s Dilemma](#)’ – Young Reader’s edition



Karen Le Billon – ‘[French Kids Eat Everything](#)’

