



March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012

## Children's Nutrition

It's common knowledge that a good breakfast is the best way to start the day, but did you know that it also improves school performance? Sadly, 31% of elementary and 62% of secondary students often skip this most important of meals.

### Eat Breakfast

A healthy breakfast promotes alertness, memory, problem-solving skills and verbal skills. It's easy to start the day right. Here are some great options:

- Oatmeal with fruit and nuts
- Toast with peanut butter
- Banana
- Bran muffins
- Cheese and fruit

... even boxed breakfast cereal is better than nothing!

### Cut the sugar

Gulp! Sugary drinks are causing children to have health issues that are not normally seen until middle age.

Statistics show that American kids are drinking an astounding 7 trillion calories per year in sugar-sweetened beverages, such as soda, contributing to an obesity rate of 17%. Canadian kids are probably not far behind.

Cutting out just one of these drinks per day could stop the epidemic growth of obesity.

### Vitamin D

This 'sunshine vitamin' has had a lot of press in recent years, but little has referred to its role in children's health.

An Ontario study investigated the vitamin D levels of critically ill children in ICUs and found that 3/4 had lower than target levels; those with the lowest levels were considerably sicker. Doctors concluded that vitamin D supplements for these kids could significantly improve their health outcomes

## Diet and Autism

Many parents of autistic children have noticed increased medical complaints and a common one is gastrointestinal inflammation. Eliminating gluten, dairy, soy & peanuts and reducing sugar seems to help in some cases. Although the link between autism and diet is controversial, it's worth a try.

If you have questions about how food is impacting your health, ask one of our pharmacists. We would be happy to help.