



Connect with Kids

## Video Shortcut: The Most Important Meal

### Video Overview

Nine-year-old Keri Thompson has always heard that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, “I don’t know why,” she says, “but they say it a lot.”

Her classmate, Yasmine Donker knows why. When she skips breakfast she can always tell the difference. “I kind of regret it because I’d be so tired and I’d want to go back to bed,” she says.”

Experts say there’s a reason for that. Without breakfast, “The system is almost void of glucose to nourish the brain, they can’t think very well (breakfast is) very important,” says Wendy McNamee, a school nutrition director.

It’s not just how kids think. Studies show students who skip breakfast get sick more often, and are more likely to get into fights or disobey their teachers.

“They tend to be more irritable, cranky, and this just causes more discipline problems,” says McNamee. In fact, another study from the Harvard School of Public Health finds that once students did get a good breakfast they had higher attendance, better test scores, lower class disruptions and fewer trips to the school nurse.

To Yasmine Donker, that makes perfect sense. “(Breakfast) gets me started and gets my energy worked up,” she says.

Still, according to federal estimates, as many as ten million kids eligible for school breakfasts aren’t getting it. Countless others aren’t eating breakfast at home because parents are so busy or simply don’t understand the importance of that first meal.

“Think about your children,” says McNamee, “Think about why you’re sending them to school. To do well academically, to learn about the social aspects of life, and they need to be well fed to be able to do that.”

### Discussion and Self-Reflection Questions

- Can you tell a difference in the way you feel when you have or have not had breakfast?
- Why or why not do you have breakfast before school? Do your parents understand the importance of having breakfast – for kids and adults?
- What resources might be available at your school in order to have a healthy breakfast?