

Benefits of porridge for children

A good breakfast is important for a child's development; however many children are getting a less than nutritious breakfast (with many skipping breakfast altogether). We want the best for our children. We want them to get the most out of school. We want them to develop, grow, learn and play. For this to happen, it is vitally important that our children get each day of to the best start. This means a healthy balanced breakfast.

For hundreds of years, a healthy breakfast for a child was generally nothing more than a bowl of porridge.....however, through the 80's and 90's the role of porridge was "replaced" by the "cardboard" breakfast.....the myriad of boxed, processed cereals, especially those aimed at the younger market. With convenience becoming the watchword of the consumer, very quickly sales of traditional cereals for the "hot" breakfast dwindled. But guess what....Porridge is back!!

Yes, with sales of porridge in Ireland equating to around 5 million bowls a week, it's never been more popular. Let's look at why starting your child's day with a bowl of hot porridge can be hugely beneficial to their future wellbeing.

Benefits of porridge

It's one of the best things you can feed your children in the morning. It tastes delicious, is versatile and is so easy to make. As a low GI food, porridge oats release their energy slowly (unlike fast "boost and crash" sugary cereals). Studies of 10,000 children show that those who eat oats regularly are less likely to be overweight, so keeping childhood obesity at bay. New research suggests feeding children high energy breakfast foods such as porridge at a young age boosts their exams results at school. A bowl of porridge can be the perfect platform to add fresh fruit or honey topping to give even more benefit. Oats contain of the essential nutritional needs of children including starch (a great source of energy), protein (protein is the building blocks of growth and oats have more protein than many other cereals) and calories (oats are an excellent source of the energy your child needs). Porridge contains many vitamins and minerals including thiamine, calcium and iron and many trace elements including zinc and managanese. Oats are the only food source of avenanthramide which is thought may offer protection against some cancers and heart disease

To get the best from your porridge, be sure you choose jumbo or regular rolled oat varieties rather than heavily pulverised cheaper porridge. For the ultimate porridge, look for "Steel Cut" oats. They are generally more expensive and can take longer to cook and will be a bit rougher in texture, but they are the pure unprocessed grain which will means it will release energy for longer and have other benefits including helping digestion. "Steel Cut" are known as the "caviar" of the porridge world.

So, as you can see, when thinking about how to give your child a head start this coming school year, look no further than starting the day off with a bowl of hot steaming porridge.....a hug in a bowl!

Nutritionist Service

Whelehans have an in-store nutritionist service with nutritionist Caroline Masters. A consultation consists of in depth analysis of major body systems including liver, digestion, hormones plus personal health history, family history and review of daily diet. Call Caroline Masters on 086 3994615 as the time for doing is now with motivation and education. Caroline can help you to lose weight steadily without feeling hungry with better food choices and increased exercise. Caroline has a special interest in food intolerance. It is a relaxed, private space where we can work together for a healthier and happier you. You can also call Whelehans Pharmacy on 044 9334591 or email nutrition@whelehans.ie to make your appointment. The nutrition clinic at Whelehans provides a friendly, affordable, flexible service suitable for men, women and children.

For comprehensive and free health advice and information call in to Whelehans Pharmacy, log on to www.whelehans.ie or dial 04493 34591.