

7044 - Breakfast Does Every Body Good!



In the rush to get to school or work, many of us skip breakfast. Yet it makes sense to fill your "empty tank" after a long night without food. Recent research proves that breakfast really is the most important meal of the day – and has a long list of benefits.

When we eat, our body experiences something called the thermic effect – we burn calories just by digesting and absorbing our food. If you get up at 7 am and don't eat your first meal until noon, that's 5 hours during which your calorie burn has slowed down unnecessarily. Eating in the morning, and then every 3 - 4 hours, keeps your body burning fuel efficiently - and helps prevent weight gain.

Studies show that breakfast eaters also:

- Get more essential vitamins and minerals (breakfast skippers rarely compensate in other meals);
- Get more bone-building calcium (mainly milk products) throughout the day;
- Have more normal weight and half the risk of developing obesity and insulin resistance – major risk factors for diabetes and heart disease;
- Eat less fat and fewer calorie-dense foods all day;
- Are less likely to overeat or snack in the evening;
- Have lower cholesterol levels and reduced danger of heart disease; and
- Are more likely to live to be 100.

What is breakfast? Breakfast can be any combination of foods, liquid or solid, that provides carbohydrates, protein and a little fat. It should provide about 20-25% of your daily energy needs – around 400 calories – more if you are very active.

What does that mean in terms of food? Breakfast can be anything you like to eat – leftover pizza, a fruit smoothie and muffin, whole grain cereal with fruit and low fat milk, rice with chicken and vegetables, or tortillas and beans with salsa and a glass of milk. The choice is up to you.

There are good reasons to include something from all food groups – protein (milk products/meat and alternatives), whole grains, and fruit and vegetables. Here's why:

- Proteins like milk, yogurt, cheese, eggs, peanut butter and nuts keep us alert, responsive, calm and focused.
- Whole grain products like multigrain toast or a bowl of oatmeal are high in fibre. High fibre foods fill you up on fewer calories, help to lower bad cholesterol levels and ward off hunger pangs.
- Fruits and vegetables also offer fibre, along with literally thousands of nutrients to help keep your brain and body fuelled for the day ahead.

Easy-to-make Breakfasts: Here are some suggestions to get your day off to a healthy start – no matter how little time you have.

On a plate or for the road - Whole wheat or multigrain toast or English muffin topped with peanut butter, baked beans, eggs or cheese with milk and a piece of fruit, banana dog (peanut butter, a banana, and raisins in a long whole grain bun or wrapped in a whole grain tortilla), cold pizza and 100% fruit-veggie juice

In a bowl or 'to-go' container - Whole grain cereal with 1% milk topped with fruit and nuts, lower fat yogurt with crunchy cereal, fruit (fresh or dried) or nuts – serve in a bowl or to-go plastic container for the road, country cottage cheese (apple cubes mixed with cottage cheese) and a bran muffin

In your hand – A cereal bar with milk or a yogurt drink and piece of fruit

