Q. How can I make breakfast healthier?

ASK THE DOCTOR *Wellness*

HEALTHY BREAKFAST HABITS

A. When you wake up in the morning, it's likely been 8 to 12 hours since your last meal. And you're probably hungry. Yes?

Your next move could literally shape your day and your body. If you eat anything close to the Standard American Diet (SAD) breakfast, your morning munch-fest might look like this:[1]

- Head straight to the kitchen and make a cup of coffee

- Devour a sugary bowl of cereal or oatmeal and scarf down some pastries

- Eat last night's dinner leftovers like a slice of pizza and cake

- Grab a drive-through latte and a couple donuts on your way to work

If any of these breakfast routines sound familiar, you're not alone. And you already know these types of foods aren't the best way to start your day. Right?

Maybe you should just skip breakfast. Even though it might help you eat fewer calories if you don't eat until lunchtime, skipping breakfast might not be the best option, according to the American Heart Association.[2]

People who skip breakfast are more likely to:

- Be overweight or obese

- Have diabetes, heart disease, and high cholesterol

- Use tobacco

- Avoid exercise

- Make poor food choices throughout the day

- Eat more foods high in sugar, calories, and fat

Get the picture? Breakfast can be a smart way to start your day, if you eat the right foods.

If you want to make breakfast healthier, here are some things you can do:

- Keep it simple with whole-grain toast or cereal, fresh fruit, or Greek yogurt.

- Plan ahead. Make muffins with healthy ingredients (berries, bananas, nuts). Or slow-cook oatmeal overnight.

- Make a smoothie with frozen fruit, bananas, leafy greens, ice, and a blender.

- If you're in a hurry, take it with you.

- Or if you stop to order breakfast, pick healthier options like an egg scramble, whole-grain oatmeal or toast, or a fruit bowl (instead of pancakes drenched in syrup, pastries, and sugary drinks).

Starting your day with a healthy breakfast can set the tone for better choices and improved overall health. When you fuel your body with healthy foods, you'll feel better, be healthier and have more energy. And that's a great way to start your day.

References

1. Statista. (2024). Most popular breakfast foods among consumers in the United States. From: https://tinyurl.com/yc35dvba

2. American Heart Association. (2017). How to make breakfast a healthy habit. From: https://tinyurl.com/yxau28ou