

BREAKFAST BITES

Breakfast? Who has time?

“Give me some sugar and caffeine and I can face the day. Besides, why eat if I’m not yet hungry? I can spend breakfast time snoozing for a few more precious minutes!”

In truth, your body is ready to break its fast once you’ve given it some needed sleep. It’s time to start a new day (even if your sleeping schedule is askew with a swing shift work schedule). That includes providing it with the needed support nutrients to keep you energized, healthy and alert. Water, carbohydrates, protein, fat, vitamins and minerals are the 6 categories of nutrients your body needs.

Common excuses for skipping breakfast:

- **Time crunch!** Answer: Plan ahead. That excuse only works once or twice. Then, it’s time to prioritize your health. We’ll share ideas for grab ‘n go meals.
- **Makes me hungrier!** Answer: Choose wisely. We’ll share breakfast ideas to keep you satiated for hours.
- **Makes me gain weight!** Answer: Not likely. A continually growing body of data shows an association between skipping breakfast and obesity. Eating smaller portions of nutrient-rich foods 5-7 times daily, is linked to better overall health and better weight management. Meals containing whole grains, fruit, and protein not only provide our bodies with needed nutrition, but they may increase our metabolic rate as we break-fast. We even think better when we start our day with a balanced meal.

Factor These in for Breakfast

Fluids First: Your body needs water! You can serve it up in 100% fruit juice, coffee, tea, smoothies, and milk. It makes sense to start with a tall glass of fresh tasting water before even thinking of loading your body with caffeine and sugars.

Fiber-Filled: You’ll find that some routine of consuming soluble and insoluble types of food fiber in your breakfasts will pay off. Soluble dietary fibers are found in foods like oats and oat bran, rye, barley, ground flax and psyllium seeds, nuts, fruits and vegetables such as carrots and broccoli. Soluble fibers help your body get rid of excess cholesterol (both Total and LDL). It also helps the body absorb sugars more slowly (more constant blood sugar levels result) and slows the emptying of your stomach (feel full longer, too). Insoluble dietary fibers include whole wheat products, nut & seeds, lignans, corn bran, vegetables and the skin of fruits. This type of undigested carbohydrate tones your gastrointestinal (GI) muscle and prevents constipation. Foods containing toxins remain in the GI tract for a shorter duration.

Fruitful: By including fruit, you supply your body with a ready source of fuel, accompanied by generous amounts of vitamins, minerals, soluble fiber and phytonutrients, while avoiding sodium, excessive calorie content and fats. Fruit is colorful, sweet, fragrant, and generally is a great option for jump-starting the body and mind.

Flavorful & Fun: Break your fast by alternating between 2-3 simple breakfast menus which appeal to your taste buds and keep “boring” at bay.

Fast: Stock up on the fruits (frozen, fresh, canned), juices, whole grains, lowfat milk or yogurt, low fat cream cheese spread, peanut butter, lean ham, eggs and other foods needed to start your day right. Even if you prefer to eat the same basic, quick food each morning, add variety by choosing different types of fruit or juice, spreads for your toast or toppings for your oatmeal, pancakes or cereal.

Fortified with Nutrients: Don't forget to eat a breakfast that is rich in vitamins, minerals, fiber and phytonutrients. When you choose whole grains, you also are including more essential nutrients such as the B-vitamins (Folacin, Thiamine, Pantothenic Acid, Pyridoxine), Vitamin E, Iron, Potassium, Zinc, and other trace minerals.

Friendly Fats: Traditional breakfast foods can be heavy in cholesterol and saturated fats. Challenge yourself to make room at the breakfast table for healthy heart-friendly fats. Choosing sources of fat containing less saturated fat and little or no *trans* fats offers lifelong benefits.

Breakfast Menu Ideas

Providing 300-400 calories

Option A

1 scrambled egg, 1/2 oz. turkey ham, + 1 oz. low fat cheese + 1 slice fresh tomato between 2 toasted whole grain English muffin halves + 4 thin cantaloupe slices

Option B

1 egg cooked with 2 Tbsp shredded low fat cheese, green chilies, 1/2 c. diced, cooked potato & wrapped in whole grain tortilla, served with 1/2 c. 100% orange juice

Providing 400-500 calories

Option A

2 egg veggie omelet (can use 1 whole egg + 2 egg whites to reduce cholesterol) + 2 slices whole grain toast with 2 tsp. *trans* fat free margarine + 8 oz. skim milk + 1/2 ruby red grapefruit

Option B

3/4 c. bran flakes with 8 oz. 2% fat milk + 2 Tbsp raisins + 1 slice whole grain toast with 1 Tbsp. crunchy peanut butter + coffee or water

THE ENIGMATIC EGG

The Egg. Until the link of the cholesterol in egg yolk with the heart disease debate in 1961, eggs enjoyed their place at the breakfast and lunch tables and in salad recipes. Because the yolk of one large egg contains an average of 215 mg of cholesterol, exceeding daily recommended intake for those with unhealthy serum cholesterol levels (>200 mg), the skids have been placed on the egg. A number of yolk-free egg products such as Eggbeaters are available, but can be limiting and, perhaps, not as flavorful. The puzzle is not completely solved, but let's look at some facts and let you decide

- The "gold standard" when it comes to bioavailability. 93.7% of egg protein is available to be used by the body for growth, compared with 84.5% for milk, 76% for fish and 74.3% for beef.
- Rich in choline, protein, folate, vitamin A and E, iron, and riboflavin.
- Still a good value for the budget.
- Versatile; served for any meal in many types of recipes
- People who consume a low fat meal plan can enjoy an egg daily without significantly impacting their risk of heart disease (www.medicinenet.com; article 50736)

Better Breakfast Options with Staying Power

INSTEAD OF...	TRY THIS....
Frosted toaster pastry	Two whole grain English muffin or bagel halves with 1 Tbsp. of peanut butter or low-fat flavored cream cheese
Stack of Pancakes with syrup & butter	Two whole grain pancakes or waffles with fresh fruit and 2-3 Tbsp low-fat cottage cheese and flavored yogurt
Fast food version of egg and muffin sandwich	1 scrambled egg, 1/2 oz. low fat cheese, green mild chilies and salsa wrapped in a whole wheat tortilla
Sugar-sweetened cereal and whole milk	Unsweetened, whole grain cereal with skim or low-fat milk and slices of fresh fruit + 1 ounce walnuts
Donuts and coffee	Two small fruit muffins (4 mini muffins) with flax meal or wheat germ added plus 23 almonds (1 oz.) and 8 ounces skim or low-fat milk
Coffee	Breakfast smoothie (blend frozen fruit, yogurt, milk and/or 100% juice)
Sugared instant oatmeal	1 c. cooked 3 minute oats with strawberry yogurt, 1 tsp. trans-fat free margarine and 1 Tbsp. chopped walnuts
Skipping breakfast	1 c. low-fat plain yogurt with 1/2 c. fresh berries + 1/4 c. granola

Additional Reading & Resources

- <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/>
- http://www.inmamaskitchen.com/FOOD_IS_ART/reference/breakfast_nutrition.html
- <http://www.medicinenet.com/>
- <http://www.smartstart.com/#/videos/>
- http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/recipes/beverage/smoothie_tips.html
- <http://www.enc-online.org/index.html>
- <http://nutrition.about.com/od/nutrition101/a/breakfast.htm>
- <http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=90373>