

NUTRITION BITES

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CARE MANAGEMENT

Rise and Shine: The Benefits of Eating Breakfast

Valaree Williams, MS, RD, CSO, LDN, CNSC, FAND



Everyone has heard breakfast described as the most important meal of the day. Have you ever wondered if this is indeed true and why breakfast has been given the title of most important? This month, just in time for the start of a new school year, explore

the benefits of eating breakfast.

Breakfast Benefits

Kickstarts the Metabolism

Eating breakfast tells your body that there are plenty of calories to be had for the day and helps jumpstart your metabolism, which is the process of converting food into energy. This jumpstart helps you burn more calories throughout the day. When skipping breakfast, the body gets the message that food may not be available, and therefore, the metabolism slows down and burns fewer calories.

Curbs Cravings and Nixes the Nibbles

Starting the day with a healthy meal will help satisfy your hunger and make it easier to avoid nibbling on less nutritious foods throughout the day. Hunger due to skipping meals can lead to grabbing easily accessible foods, which often are not the healthiest choices.

Promotes Energy and Focus

Breakfast provides the energy you need to start your day. Skipping breakfast results in running on empty

and can lead to fatigue and a lack of focus. Several studies suggest that eating breakfast may help children do better in school by improving memory, alertness, concentration, school attendance and mood.

Leads to an Overall Healthier Diet

Breakfast eaters consume more fiber, calcium and vitamins including A, C, riboflavin, zinc and iron than breakfast skippers. Commonly consumed breakfast foods such as whole-grain cereals or bread, fruits and dairy foods are high in many of these key nutrients.

Assists in Maintaining a Healthy Weight


Eating breakfast not only helps prevent weight gain but promotes a healthy weight. Research shows a link between healthier body weights and eating foods such as cereal and low-fat dairy that are commonly consumed at breakfast.

Building a Beneficial Breakfast

Breakfast can set the nutritional foundation for the day, so it is important to choose foods carefully. An ideal breakfast includes carbohydrates, protein, healthy fats and fiber. Carbohydrates provide quick energy while protein promotes longer-lasting energy, and fats help you feel satisfied after eating while fiber keeps you feeling full.

Despite the known benefits of breakfast, survey data shows that 25% of American adults skip breakfast. Busy schedules, oversleeping and rushing to start the day can lead to skipping breakfast. Prepare breakfast in advance





or try some of the easy breakfast ideas below to fuel up for your day.

- Whole-grain cereal with fruit and low-fat milk
- Whole-grain toast or English muffin with peanut butter
- Banana with peanut butter
- Apple with a string cheese stick
- Yogurt with fruit
- Protein bar or shake
- Hard-boiled egg and a piece of fruit
- Overnight oatmeal
- Oatmeal with almond butter and dried fruit
- Grits with an over-easy egg
- Avocado toast
- Fruit and yogurt smoothie
- Nuts and dried fruit
- Cottage cheese with fruit

Time-Saving Tips for Breakfast Eating Success

Plan ahead: Determine breakfast plans for the week and be sure to have the items on hand. Eating on the run? Prepare and pack your breakfast the night before.

Batch cook: Prepare large amounts of breakfast items on the weekend that you can quickly reheat in the morning. Oatmeal, grits, hard-boiled eggs and overnight oats are great make-ahead options.

Organize your fridge and pantry: Store breakfast foods together in the fridge and pantry to make them easy to see and grab.



Featured Recipe

Baked Oatmeal with Pears

For complete recipe and nutrition facts: [Eating Well](#)

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour

Servings: 6



INGREDIENTS

2 cups old-fashioned oats
½ cup walnuts, chopped
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon baking powder
¾ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
2 cups unsweetened almond milk or 2% milk
1 cup low-fat plain Greek yogurt (optional)
¼ cup pure maple syrup
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 pears, diced small (about 2 cups)
1/3 cup low-fat plain Greek yogurt (optional, for topping)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F, and coat a 9-inch-square baking dish with cooking spray.
2. Mix oats, walnuts, cinnamon, baking powder, salt, nutmeg and cloves in a large bowl. Set aside.
3. Whisk almond milk (or milk), maple syrup, oil, vanilla and 1 cup of yogurt in a medium bowl.
4. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients, and gently mix in pears. Transfer the mixture to the prepared baking dish.
5. Bake until golden brown for about 45 to 55 minutes. Top each serving with 1 tablespoon of the remaining yogurt if desired.

To make ahead

When cool, wrap individual servings in plastic wrap or transfer to mason jars and refrigerate for up to 3 days, or wrap in parchment paper and freeze for up to 2 weeks. To serve, remove plastic wrap and microwave for 30 seconds (2 to 3 minutes if frozen). Top with 1 tablespoon of Greek yogurt if desired.

Serving Size (1¼ cups): 311 calories; carbohydrates 37.8g; dietary fiber 5.1g; fat 14.8g; saturated fat 2.1g; cholesterol 3.8mg; protein 9.3g; sodium 449.3mg.

