

Breakfast: Make a Great Start

More than any other meal, breakfast is an investment in your good health. Eating in the morning helps you stay focused and energized throughout the day. Breakfast increases the likelihood of meeting recommended daily doses for essential vitamins and minerals that help prevent disease. And recent research makes the idea of a morning meal even more appetizing. A study in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association found that individuals who eat breakfast are less likely to be overweight - and more likely to exercise - than non-breakfast eaters.

Preparing a healthful breakfast doesn't have to be difficult. Try to include the following elements for better breakfasts into your morning meal.

1. **Eat mindfully** - sit to eat, even if it's only for five minutes and try to focus only on your meal. If you rush around while you're eating, you won't feel like you've had a meal states Lisa R. Young, Ph.D., R.D. Try stocking your shelves with items you can grab and go for those days you don't have time to eat at home. Here are some healthy suggestions:
 - Whole grain cereal- single serving bowl
 - String cheese - with whole-wheat crackers
 - Hard boiled eggs - cook several to have on hand
 - Low-fat yogurt - add Hodgson Mill Milled Flax Seed or Organic Golden Flax Seed
 - Hot Cereal -try Hodgson Mill Oat Bran Cereal with dried fruit or preserves
2. **Lean Protein** - Eating only refined carbohydrates may cause you to be hungry again in about two hours. Protein is digested at a slower rate than carbohydrates, which keeps blood sugar levels steady and helps you feel satisfied longer. See above listing for good choices.
3. **Fill up with fiber** - go for whole-grain breads and cereals that provide at least four grams of fiber per serving. Boost your intake further; supplement your morning meal with a serving of fruit. Whole fruit has an edge over juice when it comes to a full feeling. Fruit takes longer to eat and digest due to the fiber. Insoluble fiber from whole grains are largely indigestible and takes up space in the stomach, helping you feel full. Soluble fiber also found in grains and fruit and helps lower cholesterol. These carbohydrates provide a long-lasting source of energy, so you continue to feel fueled several hours after eating. According to research published in the International Journal of Food Science and Nutrition, the energy supplied by a breakfast high in fiber-rich carbohydrates versus one that is high in fat may result in better mental focus during morning hours.
4. **Front-load your day with nutrients** - Breakfast offers an excellent opportunity to increase your daily vitamin and mineral intake. People who eat breakfast had a higher overall intake of vitamins, minerals, nutrients and fiber than those who skip their morning meal. Those components help protect against a variety of diseases, ranging from heart disease to osteoporosis.
5. **Savor your favorite tastes** - if your choices aren't the most nutritious, small tweaks can make them more healthful. If you have a sweet tooth in the morning, instead of having a doughnut try a piece of nutty whole-grain bread with a tablespoon each of almond butter and fruit preserves for satisfaction. If you like eggs but have little time try microwaving an egg while toasting two slices whole wheat or rye (whole-grain) bread. Add a slice of low-fat cheese for a healthful breakfast sandwich that's ready in minutes.

If a busy schedule might interfere with your good-eating intentions, keep a variety of whole foods on hand, including fruits, vegetables (for omelets), nuts or nut butters, whole grains (bread products, cereal, oatmeal, etc.) and calcium-rich low-fat dairy products. That way, you'll always have the ingredients for a nutritious breakfast.