



NutritionMatters

Nutrition Services | Health Services Department

A Fast Break in the Morning

Does the thought of eating breakfast make you groan? Almost one quarter of Canadian adults skip breakfast, even though it is the most important meal of the day. Here are five good reasons to make breakfast a regular part of your day:

1. **Breakfast Supplies Your Body With Nutrients**

If you do not eat breakfast on a regular basis, you may not be meeting your daily needs for fibre, vitamin A, vitamin C, folate and iron. Many Canadians do not get enough of these nutrients, so good food choices at breakfast can help meet the suggested daily intakes of these nutrients.

2. **Breakfast Can Help You Maintain a Healthy Weight**

If you skip breakfast, chances are you will choose less nutritious snacks once you do feel the need to eat. Breakfast skippers, who do most of their eating later in the day when they are slowing down for the evening, may be training their bodies to store calories as body fat.

3. **Breakfast Can Be One Step Towards a Healthy Heart**

Your blood cholesterol level depends on many factors, including the amount and type of fat in the foods you eat, as well as the amount of fibre that is in the food. Breakfast foods that are low in fat and high in fibre may help keep blood cholesterol levels within a healthy range, which is good news for your heart.

4. **Breakfast Can Improve Your Performance During The Day**

Breakfast is important for both children and adults. It provides energy to carry out activities and increases mental alertness. Research has shown that eating breakfast can improve memory, problem-solving skills and overall academic performance for school children.

5. **Breakfast Routines Will Influence Children's Eating Habits Now *And* Later In Life**

Introducing a variety of great-tasting breakfast foods helps children develop good eating habits that will carry through to adulthood.



Breakfast – Quick and Easy

- ◆ Breakfast does not have to be eaten the minute you step out of bed. You may want to eat something during your morning break.
- ◆ If you are short on time, take along some fruit, cheese, crackers or some other nibblers from home to make breakfast quick and inexpensive.
- ◆ Breakfast does not have to be fancy to be wholesome. Quick-fix ideas, such as cold, whole-grain cereal with low-fat milk and fruit can give you a good start in the morning.
- ◆ Leftovers from last night's dinner can make interesting and nutritious morning meals.

Breakfast Grocery List

Why not pick up a few of these for breakfast?

- ✓ Whole grain bagels, breads, buns, pitas, tortillas
- ✓ Whole grain hot or cold cereals
- ✓ Rice
- ✓ Fruit: apples, oranges, grapes, bananas
- ✓ 100% fruit or vegetable juice
- ✓ Vegetables: tomatoes, peppers, carrots
- ✓ Soups
- ✓ Dried fruits and nuts
- ✓ Milk: skim, 1% or 2%
- ✓ Low-fat yogurt or cottage cheese
- ✓ Sliced ham, turkey or roast beef
- ✓ Eggs
- ✓ Peanut butter
- ✓ Jams, honey
- ✓ Cheese
- ✓ Crackers



Breakfast on the Run

Many fast food restaurants offer breakfast choices, but many breakfast items, such as fried eggs, hash browns, croissants and sausages are high in fat. Try to make lower-fat choices more often, such as pancakes, bagels and cold cereal. Remember to include items from at least three of the four food groups. This can be as simple as adding some fresh fruit to your cereal or pancakes, plus drinking a glass of low-fat or fat-free milk with your meal.

Breakfast Recipes

Homemade breakfast foods can be more nutritious than similar foods bought from a store or restaurant, since *you* control the ingredients. You may want to start by trying some of the following recipes:

Tropical Muesli

- 2 cups corn flakes
- 2 cups rice crisps or puffed wheat cereal
- 1 ½ cups large-flake rolled oats
- 1 cup dried apples or apricots
- 1 cup banana chips, crushed
- 2/3 cup raisins
- ½ cup shredded coconut
- ½ cup sliced almonds (optional)

In a bowl, combine all ingredients and mix well. The muesli can be stored in a resealable bag or airtight container for up to 3 weeks. Use as breakfast cereal or as a snack at work. Makes 8 cups.

Per 1 cup: 263 calories, 4g protein, 7g total fat (5g saturated fat), 49g carbohydrate, 5g fibre.

Source: *Breakfast Buddies*, Canadian Living Foundation, Breakfast for Learning, 1998.

Breakfast Quesadillas

- 2 small flour tortillas
- 2 tbsp pasta sauce
- 2 tbsp chopped ham
- 2 tbsp pineapple tidbits
- ¼ cup shredded mozzarella cheese

Spread half of each tortilla with pasta sauce; sprinkle with ham, pineapple, then mozzarella. Fold uncovered half over filling. Heat non-stick skillet over medium heat; cook quesadillas for about 2 minutes per side or until filling is hot and cheese is melted. Cut into wedges. Makes 2 servings.

Per serving: 184 calories, 8g protein, 7g total fat (3g saturated fat), 24g carbohydrate, 1g fibre.

Source: *Let's Eat Breakfast Together!* Canadian Living Foundation, Breakfast for Learning, 1998.

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