

Nutrition Matters

Nutrition Services, Community and Health Services

A fast break in the morning



Does the thought of eating breakfast make you groan? About 30% of adult Canadians skip breakfast on a regular basis - even though it is the most important meal of the day. After an overnight “fast”, we need breakfast to provide energy for our mind and body.

Five important reasons to eat breakfast:

1. Supplies your body with nutrients

Eating a balanced breakfast can supply your body with important nutrients such as carbohydrates, protein, vitamin C, folate, iron, calcium, and fibre. A balanced breakfast includes foods from at least three of the four food groups in Canada’s Food Guide.

2. Makes it easier to get your fibre

Many breakfast foods such as whole-grain cereals, breads, low-fat high-fibre muffins, and fruit are good sources of dietary fibre. When buying cereal, look at the label and choose one with at least four grams of fibre per serving.

Not only does fibre keep you regular, but it may help keep blood cholesterol levels within a healthy range, which is good news for your heart. Fibre also helps keep blood sugar levels in check.

3. Helps maintain a healthy weight

Breakfast is important for maintaining a healthy body weight. It can “jump-start” your metabolism, which is an important part of maintaining a healthy body weight. If you skip breakfast, chances are you will feel hungry later on in the day. This may result in cravings for less nutritious foods

and lead to an overall higher intake of Calories.

4. Improves performance

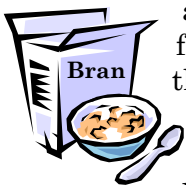
Breakfast is important for both children and adults. It provides energy to carry out activities and increases mental alertness. Research has shown that eating breakfast can improve memory, problem-solving skills and overall mental and physical performance.

5. Sets the stage for life-long healthy eating habits

Enjoying 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. Sometimes you just don’t feel hungry when you wake up. You can always wait until your morning break to have your breakfast.
- If you are short on time, take along some fruit, low-fat cheese, crackers, cereal bars, or 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 cereal with milk and fruit, or yogurt sprinkled with granola and nuts, can give you a good start in the morning.
- Leftovers from last night’s dinner such as pizza, macaroni and cheese, stir-fry, or rice casserole, can make interesting and nutritious morning meals.



Breakfast grocery list

Why not pick up a few of these foods for a quick and easy breakfast?

Grain products:

- Whole grain bagels, breads, buns, pitas, tortillas
- Whole grain cereals: oatmeal, muesli, bran or wheat cereals

Vegetables and fruit:

- Fruit: apples, oranges, grapes, bananas, berries
- Vegetables: tomatoes, peppers
- 100% fruit or vegetable juice
- Dried fruits

Milk products:

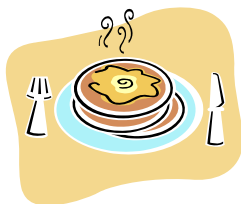
- Milk: skim, 1%, 2% or low-fat chocolate
- Low-fat yogurt, cheese, or cottage cheese

Meat and alternatives:

- Sliced ham, turkey or roast beef
- Peanut butter or other nut butter
- Nuts and seeds
- Eggs

Breakfast on the go

Many fast food restaurants offer breakfast choices, but many of these items, such as fried eggs, hash browns, sausages, and croissants are high in fat. Make lower-fat, higher-fibre choices more often, such as whole grain bagels, pancakes and hot and cold cereal. Remember to include foods from at least three of the four food groups. This can be as simple as adding some fresh fruit to your pancakes plus a glass of low-fat milk, or enjoying a toasted whole wheat bagel with low-fat cheese and a glass of 100% juice.



Breakfast recipe

Homemade breakfast foods can be more nutritious than similar foods bought from a store or restaurant, because *you* control the ingredients. Try this delicious recipe:

Blueberry-bran muffins

Tip: You can freeze some and heat them up later for a quick breakfast.

- 1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 can (14 oz/ 398 mL) peaches in light syrup
- 2/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup fat free egg substitute or 2 whole eggs
- 3 tbsps vegetable oil
- 4 cups bran flakes cereal
- 1/2 cup blueberries (fresh or frozen)



- Preheat oven to 375°F. Spray a 12 cup muffin tin with non-stick spray and set aside.
- In a medium bowl, combine flour, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt. Set aside.
- Drain peaches and reserve 1/3 cup syrup. Pour peaches and reserved syrup into a blender and puree until smooth. In a large bowl, whisk together pureed peaches, brown sugar, eggs and vegetable oil. Add bran flakes and mix well. Add flour mixture and stir just until dry ingredients are moistened. Do not over mix. Gently fold in blueberries.
- Divide batter among 12 muffin cups and bake for 20 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in centre of muffin comes out clean.

Nutrient breakdown per muffin:
187 calories, 4 g fat, 0.6 g saturated fat, 2.9 g fibre

Source: Crazy Plates. 'Berried Treasure'. Janet and Greta Podleski. Granet Publishing Inc., 1999