

Nutrition Matters



Blast off with breakfast!

A healthy breakfast provides fuel and energy after an overnight 'fast'. However, about 30 per cent of Canadians regularly skip breakfast.

A balanced breakfast includes foods from at least three food groups in *Canada's Food Guide*.

A balanced breakfast

Supply your body with energy and nutrients

Choose healthy foods for breakfast to supply your body with important nutrients such as carbohydrates, protein, vitamin C, folate, iron, calcium and fibre. These nutrients play a key role in promoting health including:

- Growth in children and during pregnancy
- The prevention of chronic diseases such as Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, cancer and osteoporosis
- Healthy digestion
- Reduce cravings and overeating of less nutritious foods later in the day.

Improve your performance

Research has shown that eating breakfast can improve memory, concentration, problem solving skills and overall physical and mental performance. For children, breakfast is linked to better performance in school.

Get your fibre

Many breakfast foods such as whole-grain cereals, breads, high-fibre muffins and fruit are good sources of dietary fibre. Look at the label and choose foods with more fibre. Higher fibre choices will have whole grain ingredients listed near the top of the ingredients list.

Set the stage for life-long healthy eating habits

Help children develop good eating habits to carry through to adulthood by offering a variety of healthy breakfast foods.

Healthy breakfast habits

- Eat breakfast every day
- Be a role model. When children watch their parents eat a healthy breakfast on a regular basis, they are likely to want to eat healthier breakfasts too
- Eat breakfast together often
- Turn off the television and remove distractions while eating. Both kids and adults do not recognize when they are full or hungry if they are distracted while eating.
- If your child is not hungry when he or she wakes up, encourage them to take something along to eat when at school. Check out the breakfast on-the-go ideas.



- Having a source of protein can help maintain your energy level throughout the morning. Try milk, yogurt, eggs, cheese, nut butters or seeds.

Breakfast at home

It does not have to take a lot of time to prepare a healthy breakfast at home and it does not always have to be ‘breakfast food’. Try these easy-to-prepare meals:

- Whole grain bread, nut butter, banana
- Whole grain wrap, scrambled eggs, cheese and vegetables
- English muffin pizza with tomato sauce and low-fat mozzarella cheese
- Yogurt, high fibre cereal, dried or fresh fruit
- Grilled ham and cheese sandwich, milk
- Whole wheat pancakes, strawberries, yogurt
- Leftovers from the night before like rice or noodles with chicken and broccoli

Breakfast on-the-go

A healthy breakfast can be simple and quick. Try one of these meals “to go”:

- Crackers, low fat cheese, orange wedges
- Whole grain bagel, low fat cheese, carrots
- Whole grain toast, yogurt, apple
- Whole grain roll, orange, hard-boiled egg
- Turkey sandwich, pear, milk
- Dry cereal mix, dried fruit, milk
- Muffin, low fat cheese, apple
- English muffin, hummus, banana

Fruit yogurt smoothie

Begin the day with a smoothie. It tastes great and is quick and easy to make.

Makes 2 servings

Ingredients

500 mL (2 cups) milk (2% MF or less) or plain, fortified soy beverage

250 mL (1 cup) yogurt (2% MF or less)

1 fresh or frozen banana, sliced

1 cup of leafy greens such as spinach, Swiss chard or kale

125 mL (1/2 cup) frozen berries

¼ cup large flake oats

1. Place all ingredients in a blender or food processor
2. Blend at high speed until smooth

Tips

- Add a slice of whole grain toast or whole grain muffin to make this breakfast balanced with three of the four food groups
- Keep a few bananas and berries in the freezer at all times
- Try different frozen fruit like mango, kiwi, peach and pineapple
- Pour into popsicle molds and freeze for a healthy frozen treat

More information

Speak to a registered dietitian at no cost by calling EatRight Ontario at 1-877-510-5102 or by going to www.ontario.ca/eatright