

The Nutritionist's Corner

The Benefits of Eating Breakfast

Starting your day off with a healthy, balanced breakfast is a great way to kick-start your metabolism and fuel your body—including your brain. Though there are challenges to eating breakfast, there is no doubt that squeezing in this essential meal has many benefits. Research shows that individuals who eat breakfast tend to:

- Be more productive and alert throughout the day
- Eat an overall healthier diet
- Have lower cholesterol levels
- Have more energy both in the morning and later in the day
- Have more success with healthy weight control

You may have to experiment with different foods and eating at different times of the morning before you figure out what works best for you. Still, finagling with your morning routine is well worth the benefits you'll get from eating a balanced breakfast in one way or another.

It seems to be cliché to say that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. However, far too many people—students, athletes, teachers—under-eat or skip breakfast altogether.

Some people argue that they don't have time, they aren't hungry in the morning, or that eating breakfast makes them even hungrier. The truth is, eating breakfast should be a *priority*. You'll find it easier to focus during your morning class, push through a workout, or study for an exam when you're running on energy from food rather than on fumes of an empty stomach.

If you think you are hungrier when you eat breakfast, you probably are not eating *enough*.

When you skip breakfast, your body goes into starvation mode, which suppresses feelings of hunger that are activated as soon as you start eating. If you stimulate your appetite with only a piece of toast, you'll be left feeling hungry. Try a more complete breakfast, with at least 3 food groups (try milk, grain, and fruit) to keep you satisfied until lunchtime.

Eating breakfast can also control late night cravings that too often lead to less-healthy choices, like pizza and wings. Taking in more calories with breakfast, lunch, and snacks can help you to avoid “crescendo” eating—eating small amounts in the beginning of the day that increase into a near-binge late at night.

Healthy breakfast choices are offered at Higgins every day. Yogurt, omelets made with egg whites, and whole grain cereal are all great options that you can grab on your way to class.

Remember: eating *anything* is better than eating *nothing* in the morning. If your only breakfast option is a leftover piece of pizza from the night before, go for it. Your brain will thank you.

Not sure what to grab on the run? Try these tips:

- A mix of cereal (preferably whole-grain), walnuts or almonds, and dried fruit
- Peanut butter and honey on a bagel or whole-grain bread
- A granola bar and a banana
- A glass of milk and a piece of fruit
- Oatmeal (a *complex carbohydrate* that is a great source of soluble fiber) with fruit

Want more tips on healthy eating? Visit the American Dietetic Association website:

www.eatright.org



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