



BREAKFAST- A GREAT START TO THE DAY!

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INTRODUCTION

The word breakfast means 'breaking the fast' as you are eating something for the first time since the previous night and have been in a fasting state¹. A paper by Timlin defined breakfast as "the first meal of the day, eaten before or at the start of daily activities within 2 hours of waking up, typically no later than 10:00am"². The theme for National Nutrition Week this year is breakfast and what a great start it can be to your day so we decided to take a closer look at why breakfast has gained the spotlight this year.

WHY HAVE BREAKFAST?

Skipping breakfast can lead to a number of problems when it comes to trying to lose weight and keeping it off. If you are trying to achieve or maintain a healthy weight, eating breakfast each and every morning must climb to the top of the to-do list.

Six reasons why breakfast is important:

1. It kick-starts your day

Breakfast provides energy (kilojoules) to kick-start your day, a healthy breakfast provides essential nutrients that the body needs. Research has shown that people who eat breakfast have more balanced diets than those who skip it and are less likely to be overweight. For example, people who eat breakfast also tend to eat a healthier diet, with more fibre and micronutrients². Because of the healthier lifestyle, people who eat breakfast tend to have reduced risk of certain diseases such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Missing breakfast may increase feelings of hunger later on in the day, resulting in snacking on less healthy foods that are not very nutritious^{1, 2}.

2. It provides nutrients

Breakfast is a great way to start your day by making sure you are getting in all the nutrients needed¹. Breakfast-skippers show a lower average intake in the number of servings of nutritious foods such as vegetables, grain products and milk products daily²⁻⁵. In a 2004 study, breakfast-skippers were shown to be deficient by up to 2/3 of the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) for vitamins A, B6, D, calcium, magnesium, riboflavin, folic acid, zinc, phosphorus, and iron². A healthy breakfast should be balanced, nutrient-dense and preferably have a low glycaemic index (give you sustained energy until your next meal).



3. It assists with weight management

Not eating breakfast in the morning may save you calories for the time being, but it sets you up for failure throughout the rest of the day. This is because after not feeding your body for several hours overnight, a lack of food in the morning will leave you grumpy and hungry very early in the day. When lunch time rolls around, you're more likely to choose something high in fat and calories to satisfy your food cravings, because you feel so hungry⁴.

Skipping breakfast is associated with a significantly higher risk of obesity. People who regularly skip breakfast have a 4.5 times greater risk of obesity compared to those who eat breakfast regularly⁶.

4. Brain power

Breakfast has been shown to improve mental performance, concentration and mood, because you provide your body with the fuel it needs to function optimally^{1,2}. Children who are well-nourished perform better academically as they have better concentration, show improvements in behaviour, problem-solving skills, short-term memory, attention and have improved attendance and punctuality at school. Inadequate nutrient intake is related to poor academic performance and negative behavioural issues^{2,7}.

5. Mood stabilising

Skipping breakfast makes you grouchy. Studies show that people who eat breakfast tend to be in better moods. Breakfast gets you started on the right track for the day. If you start out with a healthy breakfast, then you set the right mood for lunch and the rest of the day⁸.

6. Bonding time

Besides the direct effect that breakfast has on our health, the activity of sitting together as a family and eating breakfast has been linked to a lower risk for becoming overweight. Eating together as a family has also shown to offer protection for girls against eating disorders⁹.

WHAT SHOULD YOU BE EATING FOR BREAKFAST?

The guidelines of what constitutes a healthy high - quality breakfast differs from person to person. A study by Giovannini et al. who drew up guidelines for what a high-quality breakfast should include, stated that grains (namely whole grain), fruit and semi-skimmed milk products or other sources of calcium should be used⁵.

What you have for meals is up to you. History and culture have brought us bacon and eggs or simple oats. Nobody said you should have specific foods for breakfast. The only rule your body asked you to follow is to supply it with micro and macronutrients in the right proportions and at the right time to maintain a healthy body weight and immune system.



Many people prefer cereals for breakfast because cereals and porridges are quick and convenient. Often the amount of protein that you need is normally taken in at lunch and dinner. A healthy breakfast should generally follow these three rules as with any other meal:

- Balanced
- Nutrient-dense
- Preferably have a low glycaemic index (give you sustained energy until your next meal) ⁵.

Low Glycaemic Index (GI) foods are broken down more slowly and give you a steady and sustained supply of energy throughout the day as well as keep you fuller for longer. Studies found that that when low-GI foods were eaten at breakfast, lunch intake was lower compared to a high-GI breakfast⁴.

WHAT IF YOU DON'T LIKE BREAKFAST?

So, what if you don't like traditional breakfast foods? Here are a few tips if you not a breakfast food person:

1. Make sure you still eat breakfast

Just because you do not like breakfast foods does not mean you should just skip breakfast.

2. Identify what you do not like about breakfast foods

It might be that your mom always added warm milk to your cereals and that caused them to become soggy very quickly, now you can try them with cold milk. Is it the texture of porridge? Then try a crunchy texture such as FUTURELIFE® CRUNCH Smart food™ with plain yogurt and fresh berries. Perhaps you prefer something savoury then try scrambled, poached or smashed boiled eggs with avocado on FUTURELIFE® Smart Bread™ toast. Find something that you will enjoy.

3. Find a substitute

If you enjoy a health bread with some cheese and lettuce, that will serve as a great breakfast. Make sure it is healthy and filling, but other than that you can have leftovers from last night's dinner as well. Include a fruit and you are ready to go.

4. Make time

Non-breakfast foods tend to take a few seconds longer to prepare. Make sure that if you are pushed for time to rather prepare it before you go to bed and put it in the refrigerator. You could boil a few eggs in advance for a few days for breakfast. You can pack left overs separately for breakfast to make it easier. Preparation and planning is key.



CHOOSE NON-TRADITIONAL BREAKFAST FOODS

If you are still having trouble figuring out breakfast, here are some ideas for non-traditional breakfasts:

- **Smoothies**

The best thing about a smoothie is that you can be creative in what you add. Make sure to use lots of colourful fruits and/or vegetables. Add a protein source like low fat milk or yogurt. Avoid adding extra sugar. Blend away and not only is your smoothie quick to make but you can have it to go. FUTURELIFE® products can be made into a shake.



- **Sandwiches**

A guilt-free solution for quick and easy indulgence. For example, low GI FUTURELIFE® Smart Bread™ with sugar free, salt free peanut butter and the added bonus of the many health benefits of bananas which may include blood pressure lowering, prevention of certain types of cancer and heart health support⁴.



- **Fruit, yoghurt and almonds**

When spring has sprung it will bring with it an array of new seasonal fruits including citrus, guavas, bananas, gooseberries, strawberries, nectarines, apples and pears. These provide the makings of a very attractive and micronutrient-rich fruit salad¹⁰. The great thing is that you can make a fruit salad ahead of time and just dish up what you need each morning. Top with Greek yoghurt and sliced almonds.

- **Avo toast with egg**

Avocado is loaded with antioxidants, contains large amounts of micronutrients as well as heart-healthy mono-unsaturated fats and fibre¹¹. Top one or two slices of low-GI bread like FUTURELIFE® Smart Bread™ with avocado and a boiled or poached egg for added protein.

- **Eggs scrambled with your leftovers**

Don't let your leftover veggies, potato or lean meat go to waste. Chop them up into your scrambled eggs for extra nutritional value and taste. To cook scrambled eggs in a hurry, scramble 2 eggs with milk, seasoning and leftovers. Microwave for 35-45 seconds (depending on microwave), stir and microwave again for the same amount of time.





- **Health bars**

If time is really a constraint then choose a healthy snack/ breakfast bar. Choose bars that are low GI. Bars made with high fibre grain and with fruit tend to be the best option. Watch the sugar and fat content. FUTURELIFE® High protein SmartBars and FUTURELIFE® High protein LITE SmartBars are options of high protein, low GI bars.

- **Other options include**

- Savoury muffins
- Fish cakes
- Wraps
- Dinner left-overs¹²

CONCLUSION

So now before you run out the door without breakfast, think about what it is doing to your body and how it will affect the productivity in your day. Take time to figure out what works best for you from the timing of having breakfast to what you are going to eat. Make sure it's nutritious and provides you with plenty of energy. Choose what you like.

WHERE DOES FUTURELIFE® FIT IN?

Including FUTURELIFE® products as part of breakfast is a smart way to ensure you get nutrients you need to kick start your day. FUTURELIFE® products are high in protein and fibre, enriched with various nutrients such as omega-3, vitamins and minerals. They also boast the inclusion of functional ingredients such as MODUCARE®, which balances and supports your immune system, SUPRO®, a concentrated form of Soy Protein and HOWARU® Premium Probiotics which help to improve digestive and immune health.

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