

## **BETTER BREAKFASTS**

March is National Nutrition Month, the perfect time to re-evaluate that morning breakfast rush. While moms have always claimed it was the most important meal of the day, today's grab-and-go generation often leave a good breakfast in the dust.

There are many reasons why breakfast is important. Start with the fact that the body's metabolism slows down at night and doesn't speed up again until you eat something; breakfast is the jump-start your metabolism needs.

It's also a kick-start for your brain. One study on children found that kids who eat breakfast score higher on tests and are less likely to suffer from depression, anxiety, and hyperactivity.

Other studies have shown that breakfast eaters are less likely to be overweight and that if pounds do creep up, successful dieters are more likely to be breakfast eaters.

There is also evidence that eating breakfast may reduce your risk of serious illnesses like heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer. It may even strengthen your immune system so you're better able to fight off common ailments like colds and flu.

The best breakfasts have three components - a carbohydrate, a protein, and a fruit. Think cereal, bread, muffins, rolls, tortillas, or rice for the carbohydrate. Whole-grain versions pack a better nutritional punch.

Go for the lean options for protein, such as a slice or two of Canadian bacon, an egg, a slice of lean deli meat or milk, cheese, yogurt, or cottage cheese.

For fruit, choose fresh, frozen, canned, or dried versions. The optimum nutritional recommendation is five to nine daily servings of fruits and vegetables, so breakfast is the logical place to start.

Think outside of the box! Nutritious, but different ideas include: a sandwich, a slice of leftover pizza, yogurt with fruit, dried fruit, and a hard-boiled egg. A good breakfast doesn't have to be fancy or time-consuming. It can even be packed and refrigerated the night before so it's ready and waiting for those on the run.

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