



The Importance of Eating a Good Breakfast

Why eat breakfast?

Breakfast is often called the most important meal of the day, and there are good reasons for that. Eating breakfast benefits both adults and children in many ways:

Energy for your day

When you wake up in the morning, your body has been fasting, or going without food, during the hours you were asleep. Eating breakfast means you “break the fast” and give your body and brain the energy they need to function. Starting the day with more energy means you’ll feel better throughout the day.

A healthy eating pattern

By eating breakfast, you will feel more satisfied and be less likely to overeat later in the day. If you are trying to lose weight, don’t try to cut calories by skipping breakfast. Studies have shown that most people who have lost weight and kept it off eat breakfast every day.

Better at work and school

Studies have shown that adults who eat a healthy breakfast are more efficient during their workday than those who do not. Children who don’t have breakfast get sleepy at school, have a harder time paying attention, and tend to eat more junk food later in the day. Kids who do eat breakfast get higher test scores and perform better in sports.

Nutrition benefits

Breakfast is a great opportunity to eat nutritious foods like whole grains, fruits, and dairy products to ensure you and your children are getting all of the vitamins and minerals you need.

What should I eat?

A healthy breakfast doesn’t have to include traditional breakfast foods. A variety of whole grains, proteins, and fruit can make an excellent start to your day. Some examples are:

- Whole grain cereal with nonfat milk
- Oatmeal with raisins or fresh fruit
- Whole wheat English muffin with peanut butter
- Corn tortilla with beans
- Eggs and whole grain toast
- Smoothie made of fresh or frozen fruit and nonfat yogurt
- Half a turkey sandwich on whole wheat bread
- Dinner leftovers like soup, stew, pasta, or casseroles

How can I make breakfast a part of my day?

Start small

If you don't feel hungry in the morning, start with something small, like a piece of toast or half of a container of yogurt. Once you get used to eating earlier in the day, start adding more to your morning meal. Or, try having a glass of water or juice when you first wake up, and eat breakfast after an hour or so when your appetite has increased.

Pack and go

If you can't eat before you leave for work or school in the morning, have plenty of easily packable foods on hand to take with you. Try string cheese, whole grain crackers, yogurt, or packets of oatmeal.

Plan ahead

If you need to wake up a bit earlier each day to have time to enjoy a healthy breakfast, it's worth it. Keep quick options handy for when you're running short on time.

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Other resources

- Connect to our Web site at **kp.org** to access health and drug encyclopedias, interactive programs, health classes, and much more.
- Check your *Kaiser Permanente Healthwise Handbook*.
- Contact your Kaiser Permanente Health Education Center or Department for health information, programs, and other resources.
- Visit **kp.org/nutrition** for a wealth of information on healthy eating.

This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor.