

EAT BREAKFAST LIKE A KING

Are you a breakfast eater or a breakfast skipper? If you have been skipping breakfast to lose weight, you may be doing your body more harm than good. Some studies have shown that skipping breakfast is associated with the prevalence of obesity. Breakfast eaters tend to have normal body weight than breakfast skippers. While studies have yet to show a consistent link between eating breakfast and body weight, one of the hypotheses given is that even though breakfast skippers miss the calories from breakfast, it might be compensated through foods eaten later in the day.

Breakfast skippers are more likely to overeat later in the day due to hunger pangs and this can lead to overweight. On the other hand, breakfast eaters tend to have normal body weight because they are less likely to overeat and their calorie intake is more evenly distributed throughout the day. Other factors like the characteristics and personal attributes, such as exercise habits, of breakfast eaters and breakfast skippers also play important roles in weight management.

Breakfast skippers usually choose foods that are readily available around them, such as foods from vending machines, fast food restaurants and office cookie jars when hunger pangs strike later in the day. This leads to poor food choices and overall diet quality in breakfast skippers compared to breakfast eaters.

With adequate nutrients from breakfast, breakfast eaters will have better concentration, higher productivity and better problem-solving ability that require memory compare to breakfast skippers. On the other hand, breakfast skippers often feel tired, irritable and restless in the morning because they do not have adequate energy for their brains and muscles to sustain activity throughout the day.

Research suggests that skipping breakfast might disturb our energy metabolism and create a degree of insulin resistance and higher fasting lipid profiles, which are the known

You may have heard the saying, “Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince, and dinner like a pauper” by well-known American author and nutritionist Adelle Davis. This popular quotation gives much weight to breakfast, which literally means “breaking the fast of the night”. But more and more Singaporeans, too busy or weight conscious or perhaps both, have been skipping the most important meal of the day and it is not a good sign. Zoe Chiang, dietitian, NHG Polyclinics, tells us why.

risk factors for cardiovascular disease. Although this suggestion has yet to be proven, researchers have found that children who eat breakfast may have better cognitive function, predominantly memory, academic performance, school attendance rates, psychosocial function and mood.

Parents play a major role in the development of healthful food choices and consumption, as well as provision of nutritious foods to their children. Having parents who eat breakfast in the morning increases the likelihood of eating breakfast among children. Children who eat breakfast are more likely to have this healthful habit endure into adulthood.

Quality of breakfast matters

It is important to include a variety of foods in your breakfast to provide all the nutrients needed for your body. Remember to include:

Carbohydrate: It provides energy for your body and brain. Choose wholegrain products like wholegrain cereal, whole wheat bread, oatmeal, tortilla or whole wheat pita as they provide more fibre and nutrients, as well as enhance the feeling of satiety or makes you feel full faster.

Protein: It helps to build and repair your body and helps you stay focussed. Include low fat cheese, lean chicken or meat, low fat yoghurt, egg or a small handful of unsalted nuts in your breakfast to get the protein that you need.



Fruit: Colour up your breakfast with different types of fruit. Include fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruit in your breakfast. Remember to drain away the syrup from canned fruits. Dried fruit is highly packed with fruit sugar too so keep that to only a handful each time.

Is time the biggest obstacle to having a good breakfast? Here are some tips to keep you in tip top condition for the rest of the day:

- ✦ Get organised the night before: Set the table with bowls and spoons at night after dinner. At the same time, put out the wholegrain cereal for children to choose the next morning.
- ✦ Set the alarm 10 minutes earlier: Wake up a few minutes earlier to squeeze in a quick breakfast.
- ✦ Be a good role model: Make it a habit to sit down and have breakfast with your children every morning.
- ✦ Keep breakfast simple: Get something as quick as a bowl of wholegrain cereal with fresh fruit or a slice of whole wheat toast with a glass of milk on busy days.
- ✦ Ensure healthy foods are well stocked: Foods like wholegrain cereals, whole wheat toast, yoghurt and fruits make a good choices for breakfast.
- ✦ Pack your breakfast to go: Pack your breakfast for the road if you have no time to eat at home.

On-the-go breakfast ideas:

- 🍌 Instant oatmeal with fruits, nuts or raisins
- 🍌 Low fat yoghurt with fruits
- 🍌 Wholegrain cereals with fruits and low fat milk
- 🍌 Whole wheat toast with peanut butter
- 🍌 Lean meat or chicken or egg sandwich
- 🍌 Lean chicken and low fat cheese wrapped in a tortilla
- 🍌 Sliced, hard boiled egg, lettuce and cucumber stuffed in a whole wheat pita
- 🍌 Homemade smoothie made with low fat milk and fruits (banana/ frozen strawberries)
- 🍌 Low fat cheese or lean meat/ chicken with toasted wholegrain English muffin

In a nutshell, even though research has not established a consistent relation between eating breakfast, body weight and other health complications, it is important to eat breakfast to obtain all the nutrients for your body. Think of breakfast as the morning fuel to jump-start your morning and energise your day. An irregular meal frequency can lead to overeating at subsequent meals. So, remember, eat breakfast like a king!

