



Eat a Healthy Breakfast

CHALLENGE

Start the day with a healthy meal

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read "Eat a Healthy Breakfast."
2. Create a plan to eat a healthy breakfast daily.
3. Keep a record of your completed Health Challenge in case your organization requires documentation.

What's for breakfast? In the cult-classic movie *Wedding Crashers*, Jeremy Grey (played by Vince Vaughn) plans to skip the morning meal to get stuff done.

That's how some people deal with breakfast, but it often leads to overeating later. And then there's another extreme.



When Gray walks into the dining room, he reverts to the See-Food Diet. Instead of skipping breakfast, he piles his plate with bacon, scrambled eggs, waffles, fries, scones, and a flood of syrup.

Do you eat breakfast? You should, but probably not an all-you-can-eat buffet or stuff you can buy at a quickie mart or drive through.

Starting the day with a healthy meal can help you feel better, reduce your risk for chronic disease, and live longer. You hungry? Take the month-long health challenge to Eat a Healthy Breakfast.

How much do you know about the benefits of eating a healthy breakfast. Take this quiz to find out.

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1. If you skip breakfast, you are more likely to crave junk food and sweets later in the day.
2. Skipping breakfast is a good way to boost your metabolism and limit calories to lose weight.
3. Eating *any* kind of oatmeal or cereal for breakfast is a healthy way to start the day.
4. Eating breakfast improves brain function, memory recall, and the ability to concentrate.
5. Starting your day with a healthy breakfast lowers your risk for obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and high cholesterol.

How did you do? If you answered any of these statements incorrectly, you could benefit from learning more about breakfast. Healthy breakfast foods typically include fruits, whole grains, and healthy proteins. And not all oatmeal or cereals are created equal. Some are high in sugar and calories, with little nutritional value. Research shows that when you take the time to eat a healthy breakfast, you reduce your risk for many chronic diseases and help prevent weight gain.

Answers. 1. True. 2. True. 3. False. 4. False. 5. True.

Never skip breakfast again

An estimated 31 million Americans skip breakfast every day.¹ Many who bypass the morning meal do so because they're running late. Some forgo breakfast because they think it will help them control calories and lose weight. But either excuse for skipping breakfast can lead to:²

- Increased risk for heart disease, diabetes, and high cholesterol
- An impaired ability to think and concentrate
- Cravings later in the day for unhealthy snacks and drinks
- A greater risk for weight gain and obesity
- Lack of energy, or feeling of fatigue and tiredness
- Increased levels of stress and irritability

What's on your breakfast menu?

Too many of those who do eat breakfast gobble up doughnuts, fast food, high-calorie drinks and sugary cereals. Eventually, this kind of daily-breakfast habit leads to a long list of health problems. But it doesn't have to be that way. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, and what you eat makes a difference.

4 reasons to eat a healthy breakfast

Eating healthy foods and snacks throughout the day, including breakfast, is a good habit. Your diet should include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, and plenty of water. And some of those foods are perfect for breakfast. Hungry? Check out these four reasons to eat a healthy breakfast:

1 Prevent weight gain

In the National Weight Control Registry, 90 percent of the 3,000 people who maintained a healthy weight said they ate breakfast every day.³ Many said they ate whole-grain cereal, oatmeal, or toast for breakfast.

2 Lower the risk for diabetes

If you don't have diabetes, you probably know someone who does. About 30 million people have type 2 diabetes, and millions more are at risk. Research shows eating a healthy breakfast can help prevent or control diabetes.⁴

3 Control cholesterol

Want to avoid a heart attack caused by blocked arteries? Keep your cholesterol under control. In a recent study, researchers found that eating whole-grain oats daily helped lower LDL (bad) cholesterol and total cholesterol.⁵

4 Improve brain function

Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania tracked academic performance and breakfast habits of 1,269 students.⁶ Those who ate a healthy breakfast daily had better test scores, a more developed vocabulary, better comprehension skills, and higher IQs than those who did not.

A guide to healthy breakfast cereals
tinyurl.com/gh95k69



Healthy breakfast ideas for busy people

If you're among the millions who rush out the door without

breakfast, or you're inclined to go for pastries and sweets to start your day, you need a better breakfast plan. Fortunately, there are many healthy, tasty, and easy-to-make breakfast foods to choose from. Start your day out right with:

- A banana, a handful of pecans, and low-fat yogurt.
- Whole-grain cereal sprinkled with berries and slivered almonds.
- Low-fat yogurt mixed with fruit and whole-grain granola.
- Egg whites or egg substitute served with fresh fruit and whole-grain toast.



Fast and healthy breakfast ideas
tinyurl.com/ndos5fc



- A fruit smoothie made with frozen berries, banana, and ice.
- Whole-grain toast topped with peanut butter, avocado, or low-fat cream cheese.
- A strawberry, melon, and yogurt smoothie with flaxseed.
- Fruit salad and a whole-grain muffin.
- Steel-cut oats with berries.
- Breakfast burrito (fill a whole-wheat tortilla with sautéed onions, peppers, mushrooms, yams, and tomatoes seasoned with garlic and thyme).

How to eat a healthy breakfast

Eating a healthy breakfast isn't hard. But you do need to do a little work to make it happen. Make a shopping list of healthy breakfast foods that you like. Go to the store to stock up on everything you need. When you wake up in the morning, put together a healthy breakfast and be on your way. It's that easy.

Quiz:
Test your breakfast IQ
tinyurl.com/plphc3l



References

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6. Liu, J. et al. (2013). Regular breakfast consumption is associated with increased IQ in kindergarten children. Early Human Development, 89(4):257-262. From: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3606659/>





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Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Record the number of days you eat a healthy breakfast.
3. Use the calendar to record the actions and choices you make eating a healthy breakfast a regular part of your life.
4. At the end of the month, total the number of days you ate a healthy breakfast. You must do this on at least 22 days this month to complete this challenge. Then keep up this practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge™	ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary	
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____		
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_____ Number of days this month I ate a healthy breakfast

_____ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____