

Breakfast for Great Beginnings

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By: Penny Wilson

“Is breakfast really important?” the Girl Scout asked me the other day. The simple answer is “YES!” breakfast is the most critical meal you can eat. The reason is that your body has been fasting since your last meal which could be more than 10 hours ago. You may not feel hungry, but your body needs the fuel for your body to work its best in the morning and until you eat your next meal or snack. Studies have shown that those who skip breakfast may not concentrate as well as those who eat breakfast, may be short tempered and/or irritable. Basically, you can think of your body like a car. If your car is low or out of gas, it is not going to run well – it may sputter, jerk and eventually come to a stop. Your body is the same way. It requires fuel (food) to keep going. If you do not eat, your body does not get the fuel it needs to run the best that it can.

“But I don’t like traditional breakfast food,” another Girl Scout moaned. Breakfast does not have to be “traditional.” Eat anything healthy you like, as long as you eat. A peanut butter and jelly sandwich can be a great breakfast – quick to make and portable to eat as you catch the bus or ride to school. Skim yogurt and a piece of fruit is another quick, portable option.

One more reason to eat breakfast is that studies have show that those who eat breakfast tend to be leaner. In study of group of people who lost 30 pounds or more and kept the weight off for at least a year 78% regularly eat breakfast every day of the week. Why does eating breakfast help with weight loss and maintenance of weight loss? One reason is that it may prevent you from becoming over hungry later in the day. When your body needs food, it *needs food* and lets you know it through stomach rumblings, getting light headed and grouchy among other things. This happens when you have let too much time go between meals. Also, some people who do not eat breakfast report craving sugary carbohydrates towards lunch time. What is all this telling you? Your body *needs* food. If you wait until you are starving, you are going to eat anything and everything you can get your hands on. Eating breakfast can be considered “defensive eating.” You are defending yourself from uncontrolled eating later in the day.

Here are some other ideas for quick, healthy breakfasts:

- Dump Breakfast: Mix one carton sugar free, fat free yogurt, cup low-fat granola or high fiber cereal (Fiber One) and ¼ cup mixed berries together in a bowl.
- Peanut butter-banana Roll-up: Spread 2 tablespoons peanut butter on a fajita-sized low carb whole wheat tortilla, place a peeled banana on the peanut butter, roll it up and go!
- Breakfast burrito: Lightly scramble 2 egg whites in a bowl and microwave for 45 to 60 seconds (until done). Place cooked egg whites on a fajita-sized low carb whole wheat tortilla. Add 1 tablespoon low fat cheddar cheese and 1 tablespoon salsa (optional). Tuck one end in, roll up and go!
- Breakfast pizza: Toast ½ of an English muffin. Microwave 1 slice of pre-cooked Canadian bacon as directed. Spread 1 – 2 tablespoons of pizza sauce on the muffin, top with the Canadian bacon and sprinkle with 1 tablespoon of shredded low fat mozzarella cheese. If you have extra time and help from an adult, you can broil the pizza for a minute or two in the oven to melt the cheese.