

Breakfast- Why it's truly the most important meal of the day.

By Chef Jen

Wake up and smell the coffee! (or tea or room temp water or whichever you wake up to). This week we are chatting about breakfast and yes, it is the most important meal of the day! How so? First, it starts the day off in a “good foot forward” manner.

Here's some research to back that up:

In a [longitudinal study](#) conducted in Australia, researchers discovered that participants who *skipped breakfast* in both childhood and adulthood had a larger waist circumference, as well as, higher levels of fasting insulin, total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol (the bad kind). Those factors put you at risk for cardiometabolic syndrome, which leads to heart disease. This doesn't mean that the one day you wake up late for work, hustle out the door, drop the kids at school and then don't eat until lunch time, that you will end up with heart disease. This is if you *persistently skip breakfast*.

[Other studies](#) have shown that *eating breakfast* “is also associated with greater improvements in fasting glucose, insulin & triglycerides [levels]. As well as, glucose tolerance and significantly greater satiety.” Meaning, it keeps you feeling full, satisfied for longer and decreases the risk of heart disease.

During my time in clinical dietetics, I often had patients that stated they didn't like “breakfast food”. In the dictionary, “breakfast” is referred to as a meal that is eaten in the morning. Therefore, it doesn't have to be traditional American breakfast food such as eggs, hash browns, toast, cereal, oatmeal, etc. It doesn't have to be an Instagram worthy concoction either. It can be just as simple as cheerios and milk or toast with peanut butter or a protein bar or a hard-boiled egg with toast and butter. If you don't like “breakfast food”, eating a PB&J, cold pizza, or leftover tacos in the morning is absolutely fine- (just don't make the cold pizza a habit!)

The main components of each meal should be: carbohydrates, fat and protein. For a quick example, I'll refer to a PB&J: Peanut butter is a protein and a fat. Bread and jelly are carbohydrates. It is recommended that 50% of your carbohydrate intake be whole grains such as: oatmeal, brown rice and whole wheat bread. To make your dietitian happy choose whole wheat bread for this sandwich and eat it for breakfast, as it qualifies as a meal. 😊

Another thing that qualifies you for having eaten breakfast is that it was within 2 hours of waking. If you are diabetic, that time should be shorter, as overnight you have gone approximately 8-10-12 hours of not eating since your last meal/snack. So, it's important for diabetics to eat no later than 90 minutes after waking.

Adelle Davis, one of the first famous (and controversial) dietitians said “Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and dine like a pauper”. For our body's physiology, this is best (in relation to our circadian rhythm and chances to burn calories during the day). However, for today's society and working environment, it is not. Most of the time, waking to be at work or school by 8 or 9, makes it hard to do so. Maybe this is something that we can try to adapt to

now, as we go through our “new normal”? Since a large majority of Americans are either working from home, are unemployed or quarantined/sheltered-in-place, now is a good time to try to adjust our habits and try new things.

This week’s “Cooking with Chef Jen” is focused on breakfast. The mini-quiche recipe can be used as meal prep for the week as they can be frozen. It’s a quick, nourishing breakfast for when we need to hustle out the door. By the way, the recommendation for our daily fruit and veggie intake is 5-6 servings per day. So, use this week’s recipe to try a routine of a good breakfast AND starting the day out with a serving of veggies (1 down, 4 to go!) 😊

Bon Appetit!

