

OPTIMAL EATING PATTERN

Eat less and more often - Creates a More Stable Insulin Level, Higher Energy

Did you know that if we eat more often, it actually helps us to lose weight? This doesn't mean we can eat larger quantities when we eat more often! But it helps kick our metabolism into gear when we eat more times per day. It's healthier to eat five or six smaller meals per day than the usual three large meals. We'll not only feel better, but can actually lose weight.

When we eat more often, it helps our body maintain a more stable insulin level. The sugars and carbohydrates that cause insulin to be released into the bloodstream will be more steady if we eat more often but in smaller quantities. Having consistent blood sugar levels, instead of three large spikes can start changes in the body to help us lose weight and have more energy.

When we do eat a large meal, our body releases a large amount of insulin. Our body then proceeds to store the extra calories we don't need in the form of fat. If we eat a smaller meal, then we use our food as energy instead of storing what we don't need. This is when we can start to lose weight.

This doesn't mean we can fill up on junk food or snacks when we begin to eat more often. We should eat a balanced diet in small portions to lose weight. It will just be spread out into five or six miniature meals instead of three larger meals.

Energy is also one of the key benefits when we eat more often. If the food we're consuming is healthy, then our bodies will have a steady stream of nutrition to keep us energized. It's easy to feel sluggish after eating a huge meal. Eating smaller meals more often will eliminate that. The right food is important to help us lose weight and keep our energy level high.

Protein is an important way to get that needed energy as we strive to eat more often. It doesn't have to be from meat. Including protein in each small meal is actually good for us mentally. Important amino acids in protein help keep us mentally alert and give us energy by elevating the brain chemicals called dopamine and nor-epinephrine. These chemicals give us energy and we can't get them unless protein is included in our meals.

Instead of just having a healthy snack of fruit, try combining it with yogurt for protein. Low fat versions of yogurt and cheese, eggs, tofu, and beans are some of the excellent ways to include protein without adding more meat.

Lean meats are a good source of protein. Fish is also a great way to add protein to our diets as well. Fish such as salmon is not only a good protein source, but the fat that it does include is the healthy type of Omega 3 fatty acid.

Just the act of eating helps us to lose weight! We actually burn calories when we eat. It's not the same as doing exercise, but each time we eat, our bodies burn a few calories to digest, metabolize and store the food. Five to 15 percent of the calories we eat are spent on digestion. Each time we eat, our metabolism speeds up to process the food. The metabolism slows down when we haven't eaten in long time. Eating low fat nutritious foods often will help us lose weight.

When we eat more often, it also helps to keep our mood stable. When a large meal causes excess insulin release, it removes more blood sugar than it needs to. The result becomes too little glucose in our blood. This not only reduces our energy but it also can make us feel moody and unhappy.

We often don't take the time to enjoy the food we eat. Eating slowly helps us feel full sooner. This helps us lose weight. It benefits us psychologically as well as physically. The act of eating also means we are taking a break. That fact alone can help reduce our stress levels, even if it's only for a short while. Stress is unhealthy for us in so many ways, but it also actually increases our chances of being overweight.

Take a break and enjoy a small meal five or six times a day. It is so much healthier than over eating at two or three meals a day. The added benefit of weight loss is like icing on the cake . . . probably not the best term to use. It's like having yogurt on our berries!

Delicious Ways To Start Your Day

Ladies and Gentleman, please! If there is nothing else you take away from my articles, take this and run: In order to lose weight, maintain your weight, and improve your health, you *must* eat breakfast. It's that simple.

"I have no appetite in the morning!" "I'm too busy!" you insist. Yeah, yeah, I've heard all of the excuses a million times. Read on and I shall give you the WHY, WHEN, and WHAT, on this delicious and nutritious daily ritual. (I'm bringin' breakfast back...)

OK, first the WHY:

According to a study by The American Heart Association, eating breakfast may reduce the risk of obesity by 35-50%. Why? Because when you skip a meal your brain signals your body's metabolism to sl-o-o--w down and as a result, your blood sugar drops, (which has been linked to insulin resistance syndrome, an early sign of diabetes). If your metabolism is lagging than you can not burn calories efficiently and you must burn calories to lose weight and maintain a healthy weight. What's worse, is that skipping breakfast sets you up to overeat later on in the day. So if you let yourself go too long without food not only does your metabolism slow down, but as you get hungrier and hungrier your defenses weaken. It's when you are at your weakest that your office-mate walks in with a box of donuts! You just can't help yourself. You grab for the box ("Just one", you think)... it's so delicious. As you begin to chew the moist, sweet confection, your stomach begins to gurgle, MORE! MORE! ("Well, I didn't eat breakfast", you reason)...one donut leads to another, and suddenly you've had 1,2,3 (dare I go on?). Not only are the donuts full of processed sugar and saturated fat, but since you didn't eat breakfast, your metabolism is on strike and thus the calories just chill out and lazily turn to fat (to be stored away for the next time you go too long without food). Diet sabotage.

WHEN, should you eat?

Ideally you should try and eat within an hour of waking, before your blood sugar begins to drop. If you are like me and head straight to the gym the minute you open your eyes, than it's OK to exercise first, so long as your session is only an hour. If you plan on hitting the weights and the treadmill and setting up camp then you should have a quick snack. Something easy to digest, like a piece of fruit with a little bit of yogurt, or a rice cake with a bit of natural peanut butter, not too much because you will be rushing home for the real deal as soon as you finish your sweat-sesh.

Breakfast Every Morning

Remember that eating a healthy breakfast is the best way to start off your day, and be good to yourself by eating a healthy breakfast. Notice how much better you feel through the morning and the rest of the day when you don't skip breakfast.

What's the Secret to a Better Breakfast? What Should you Eat?

By Elaine Magee, MPH, RD

It's better for your health (and your weight) to eat breakfast than to skip it. And it's definitely better to eat a healthy breakfast, high in fibers and nutrients, than one full of refined grains, sugar, salt, and/or saturated fat. But what if you're fresh out of healthy breakfast ideas?

One quick tip I use to keep my breakfast balanced is to "strive for five." That means I try to include at least 5 grams of fiber and 5 grams of protein in every breakfast.

Many people go wrong by eating a breakfast made up mostly of refined carbohydrates with very little fiber and protein -- like a refined-flour bagel, a muffin made with sugar and white flour, or a sugary low-fiber breakfast cereal. Balancing carbohydrates (preferably from whole grains, fruit and vegetables) with some protein and a little healthier fat will do a better job of staving off hunger until lunch and fueling your entire morning's activities.

To help you get there, here are some tips for making sure your breakfast is a well-balanced one, as well as some quick and healthy breakfast ideas and recipes.

A Healthy Breakfast Has at Least 5 Grams of Protein

Low-fat or nonfat dairy products can add protein to your breakfast, as can egg whites or egg substitute (egg yolk doesn't contribute protein); lean breakfast meats like Canadian bacon, extra-lean ham, turkey bacon, or light turkey sausage; and soy milk and other soy products. Here's how much protein you get from some typical breakfast foods:

Breakfast Protein Sources	Protein (g)	Calories	Fat (g)	Saturated Fat (g)	Carbs (g)
Skim milk, 1 cup	10	100	0	0	14
Low-fat yogurt, vanilla, 1 cup	9.3	253	4.6	2.6	42
Low-fat cottage cheese, 1 cup	28	160	2	1	6
Reduced-fat cheese, 1 ounce	8	70	4	2.5	1
Stonyfield Farms Organic Low-Fat, Fruit flavored	7	33	0	0	1
Egg substitute, 1/4 cup	6	30	0	0	1
Soy milk, low-fat, 1 cup	4	90	1.5	0	14
Soy-based sausage, 2 ounces	12	119	4.5	0.7	6
Tofu, extra firm lite, 2 ounces	5	43	1.4	0	2.2
Canadian bacon, 2 ounces	12	89	3.9	1.2	1
Extra lean ham, 2 ounces	11	61	1.5	0.4	0.4
Turkey bacon, 2 strips	4	70	6	1	< 1
Light turkey sausage, 2 ounces	9	130	10	2.2	1
Peanut butter, natural, 1 tablespoon	3.5	100	8	1	3.5
Light cream cheese, 1 ounce	3	53	4	2.7	1.8
Lox (smoked salmon), 1 ounce	5.2	33	1.2	0.2	0

A Healthy Breakfast Has at Least 5 Grams of Fiber

One way to get to those 5 grams of fiber is to include a whole grain and/or fruit or vegetables with your breakfast. Breakfast is the perfect time to work in a serving or two of whole grains, which along with fiber also offer many health-promoting vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals.

Get your grains at breakfast by having one of these:

- Hot oatmeal (or another hot whole-grain cereal).
- Cold whole-grain cereal.
- 100% whole-wheat bread, small bagel, English muffin, or tortilla
- Pancakes and waffles made with at least half whole-wheat flour (you can also add oats, oat bran, or ground flaxseed for an extra nutrition boost).
- Muffins and cinnamon rolls made with at least half whole-wheat flour (you can also add oats, oat bran, or ground flaxseed).

Weekend breakfast tip: Make extra part whole-grain waffles, pancakes, or muffins during the weekend and freeze them in individual plastic bags for a quick breakfast. On weekday mornings, just pop them right from the freezer into the microwave or toaster/toaster oven. Here's how much fiber you get from some typical breakfast foods:

Breakfast Fiber Sources	Fiber (g)	Calories	Carbs (g)	Fat (g)	Protein (g)
Grains:					
Oatmeal, cooked, 3/4 cup	3	124	21	2.7	4.5
Whole-grain cereal, 1 cup (Like Raisin Bran)	7	190	45	1.5	5
100% whole-wheat bread, 1	2	70	14	1	3
Whole-wheat bagel (95 g)	9	260	52	1.5	11
Whole-wheat tortilla (114 g)	8	300	54	4.5	12
Whole-wheat flour, 1/4 cup	4	110	23	0.5	4
Oats, rolled, quick, 1/4 cup	2.3	83	14	1.5	3
Barley, med., cooked, 1/2 cup	5	220	55	0.7	5
Pearl barley, cooked, 1/2 cup	3	97	22	0.3	2
Buckwheat groats, cooked, 1/2 cup	2.3	77	17	0.5	2.8
Quinoa, cooked, 1/2 cup	2.6	111	20	1.8	4
Fruit:					
Banana, 1	3.1	105	27	0.4	1.3
Blueberries, fresh, 1/2 cup	2	42	11	0.2	0.6
Raspberries, fresh, 1/2 cup	4	32	7	0.4	0.7
Dried fruit, mixed, 1/4 cup	2	120	28	0	1
Melon, 2 cups (cantaloupe or honeydew)	3	108	26	0.3	3
Vegetables:					
Mushrooms, cooked, 1/2 cup	2	22	4	0.4	2
Onions, cooked, 1/2 cup	2	29	7	0.1	1
Zucchini, cooked, 1 cup	2.2	26	5	0.2	2
Tomatoes, 1 med.	1	25	5	0	1
Nuts and seeds:					
Ground flaxseed, 2 Tbsp	3	80	4	6	3
Pecans (or other chopped nuts), 1/4 cup	3	205	4	21	3

10 Balanced Breakfast Examples

Breakfast doesn't have to take a long time to make to be healthy and nutritious. Something that's fast to prepare and easy to eat is better than nothing at all. So how do you work these healthy foods into your breakfast when you're dashing out the door on a weekday morning? Try these 10 quick and healthy breakfast ideas:

1. A higher-fiber granola bar (like Fiber One chewy bars), a banana, and 8 ounces low-fat or skim milk. This breakfast will give you 365 calories, 67 grams carbohydrate, 12 grams fiber, 13.5 grams protein, 7.5 grams fat, 3.6 grams saturated fat, 15 mg cholesterol, and 235 mg sodium.
2. Smoothie made with 6 ounces low-fat "lite" yogurt blended with 1 cup frozen fruit and 1/2 cup soy milk or low-fat milk. (230 calories, 42 grams carbohydrate, 6.5 grams fiber, 9 grams protein, 4 grams fat, 1 gram saturated fat, 5 mg cholesterol, 130 mg sodium.) **ADD protein powder for extra protein – you can easily bump that to 15-20 grams of Protein.**
3. Omelet made with 1/2 cup egg substitute, 1/2 cup vegetables, and 1 ounce reduced-fat cheese, served on 100% whole-grain English muffin. (288 calories, 35 grams carbohydrate, 7 grams fiber, 28 grams protein, 6 grams fat, 2.5 grams saturated fat, 15 mg cholesterol, 724 mg sodium.)
4. Multigrain waffle topped with 1/2-cup fresh fruit and 1/4 cup plain yogurt with 1/8 teaspoon vanilla extract and a pinch of ground cinnamon stirred in. (265 calories, 48 grams carbohydrate, 8 grams fiber, 11 grams protein, 5 grams fat, 1 gram saturated fat, 12 mg cholesterol, 386 mg sodium.)
5. Two slices French toast made with whole-grain bread and one egg (use a higher omega-3 type if possible) blended with 1/4 cup fat-free half-and-half or low-fat milk, 1/8 teaspoon vanilla, and a pinch of cinnamon. (278 calories, 42 grams carbohydrate, 5 grams fiber, 14 grams protein, 6.5 grams fat, 1.5 grams saturated fat, 215 mg cholesterol, 480 mg sodium.)
6. Breakfast burrito made with 1 whole-wheat tortilla (weighing about 50 grams), 1/2 cup egg substitute scrambled with 1/2 cup assorted cooked vegetables, and 1 ounce of reduced-fat cheese. (304 calories, 32 grams carbohydrate, 6 grams fiber, 25 grams protein, 7 grams fat, 2.5 grams saturated fat, 15 mg cholesterol, 669 mg sodium.)
7. Cooked oatmeal (1/2 cup "lower sugar" instant oatmeal cooked with 3/4 cup skim or low-fat milk), topped with 1/4 cup dried fruit or 1/2 cup fresh fruit and 1 tablespoon chopped nuts. (341 calories, 60 grams carbohydrate, 5 grams fiber, 13 grams protein, 7 grams fat, 0.5 grams saturated fat, 5 mg cholesterol, 365 mg sodium.) **Tip: Add Protein Powder**
8. Breakfast sandwich made with 1 whole-grain English muffin, 1 1/2-ounces light turkey breakfast sausage and 1 ounce reduced-fat cheese. (300 calories, 28 grams carbohydrate, 5 grams fiber, 21 grams protein, 12 grams fat, 4 grams saturated fat, 83 mg cholesterol, 690 mg sodium.)
9. Yogurt breakfast parfait made with 6 ounces low fat "lite" yogurt, 1/2-cup fresh chopped fruit and 1/2-cup low-fat granola. (302 calories, 65 grams carbohydrate, 7 grams fiber, 10 grams protein, 4 grams fat, 2 grams saturated fat, 4 mg cholesterol, 170 mg sodium.)
10. Whole-grain cereal (1 cup) with 1/2-cup skim or low-fat milk and 1/2-cup fresh fruit (like blueberries). (276 calories, 62 grams carbohydrate, 10 grams fiber, 11 grams protein, 2 grams fat, 0.2 grams saturated fat, 3 mg cholesterol, 424 mg sodium.)

How to Feel Full on Fewer Calories

By Kristie Leong M.D.

A problem many people face when they embark upon a weight loss diet is a constant feeling of hunger. Consuming few calories doesn't have to lead to feelings of hunger and deprivation. By making the right food choices, you can drop those excess pounds while still feeling full and satisfied. Here are some tips on how to feel full after a meal and still fit into that size six pair of jeans:

How to feel full: Increase your protein intake

A new study published online by the Journal of Nutrition shows that when people start their day with healthy protein sources, they tend to feel full and satisfied throughout the day. Not only did the amount and quality of protein make a difference in this study, the fact that it was consumed at breakfast seemed to be important in promoting satiety.

Eat Protein with Every Meal. "Protein is the most satiating nutrient," says former Harvard University researcher Thomas Halton, Ph.D. You should strive to eat some protein with every meal (breakfast, lunch, dinner and even with your snacks). It will be the key to avoiding those mid-morning high carb binges that can wreck havoc with even the best weight loss intentions. When it comes to feeling full, starting the day with a good breakfast and consuming protein in the morning appear to be key to avoiding feeling hungry and deprived.

How to feel full: Eat more high volume foods

High volume foods are foods that have high concentrations of water and fiber while still retaining nutritional value. Good examples of high volume foods are fruits, vegetables, and whole grain foods such as oatmeal and wheat bran. Because of their high fiber and water content, they promote a sensation of feeling full without adding additional calories. As a bonus, these foods are also high in nutritional content which means you'll be getting the vitamins, minerals, and heart-healthy antioxidants you need despite cutting back on calories. Try eating a large plate of salad with a light dressing before your meal and you'll feel satisfied with less food when the main entrée arrives.

Fill up on fiber

If you are always feeling hungry, it's a good time to evaluate your eating habits and track your fiber intake. The easiest way to feel full without consuming too many calories is to make sure you are getting enough fiber in your diet. Fiber takes longer to chew, your body can't digest it and it helps carry calories out with it, making it possible for you to avoid feeling hunger pains all day and still lose weight. Foods rich in fiber are the best and easiest way to boost your intake and feel full longer.

High Fiber Foods: Whole wheat products, Oatmeal. Fruits- raisins, apples, oranges, berries, mangos and more. Vegetables- broccoli, spinach, green leafy vegetable and more. Beans, Peas, Almonds, Flaxseed.

Don't worry if you are still having trouble getting enough grams of fiber from your diet alone. There are many products available to help boost your fiber intake and curb hunger. There are products you can sprinkle over other foods, pills, mixes to add to water, etc. Start adding fiber to your diet gradually. Aim for 25 grams as a starting point, 35 grams for your goal and continue to add fiber to that daily number as your body adjusts.

How to feel full: Add smart snacks

Although snacking sometimes earns a bad reputation due to its association with overindulging, eating two healthy snacks throughout the day can help to keep your total calorie intake down by preventing bingeing and overeating at mealtime. The key is to choose your snacks wisely and limit how much you eat. A great way to restrict portions is to have 100 calorie snack packs you can drop into your purse or tote to take to work. This will ensure that you won't overindulge by mindlessly eating more than you intended. You can even make your own hundred calorie snack packs by weighing your snack and placing hundred calorie portions into resealable plastic bags. Select whole grain snacks such as popcorn or low sugar, whole grain cereal for your snack packs rather than ones with high sugar loads. Protein Bars, nuts such as almonds and pecans also make healthy, satisfying snack choices.

To be able to cut calories without eating less and feeling hungry, you need to replace some higher calorie foods with foods that are lower in calories and fat and will fill you up. In general, this means foods with lots of water and fiber in them. The chart below will help you make smart food choices that are part of a healthy eating plan.

These foods will fill you up with less calories. Choose them <i>more</i> often...	These foods can pack more calories into each bite. Choose them <i>less</i> often...
Fruits and Vegetables (prepared without added fat)	Fried foods
Spinach, broccoli, tomato, carrots, watermelon, berries, apples	Eggs fried in butter, fried vegetables, French fries
Low-fat and fat-free milk products	Full-fat milk products
Low- or fat-free milk, low or fat-free yogurt, low- or fat-free cottage cheese	Full-fat cheese, full-fat ice cream, whole and 2% milk
Broth-based soup	Dry snack foods
Vegetable-based soups, soups with chicken or beef broth, tomato soups (without cream)	Crackers or pretzels, cookies, chips, dried fruits
Whole grains	Higher-fat and higher-sugar foods
Brown rice, whole wheat bread, whole wheat pastas, popcorn	Croissants, margarine, shortening and butter, doughnuts, candy bars, cakes and pastries
Lean meat, poultry and fish	Fatty cuts of meat
Grilled salmon, chicken breast without skin, ground beef (lean or extra lean)	Bacon, brisket, ground beef (regular)
Legumes (beans and peas)	
Black, red kidney and pinto beans (without added fat), green peas, black-eyed peas	

Fiber and Weight Loss

Want to eat more and weigh less? Think "density" when you're choosing foods.

In nutrition lingo, foods that are low in "energy density" have lots of water and fiber, but little fat and fewer calories. How do they stack up nutritionally? Just fine - According to a new study. For example, a piece of apple pie has about 400 calories; for the same calories, you can crunch on five healthful apples -- and since one or two will fill you up, you'll skinny down.

When you eat more foods that are dense in everything but fat and calories -- think juicy melons, pears, cucumbers, broccoli, and berries -- it not only helps keep you slim but also revs up the nutritional quality of your diet.

When researchers compared people on low, medium, and high energy-density diets, they discovered that women who favored foods low in energy density averaged 250 fewer calories a day compared to those in the other groups; men averaged 425 fewer calories. Yet the nutritional quality of their meals didn't suffer. In fact, they had higher intakes of vitamins A, C, and B6; folate; iron; calcium; and potassium.

In other words, eating low on the density scale isn't just good for your waist, it's good for your health; the extra fiber and nutrients fight disease as well as pounds.

Fiber is often called the "miracle nutrient. Fiber and fiber-rich foods actually help regulate blood sugar, control hunger, and increase the feeling of fullness - all of which are essential to losing weight and keeping it off.

8 reasons fiber is a miracle nutrient:

- 1) It can help you lose weight.
- 2) It allows you to maintain your weight loss.
- 3) It reduces your chances of having a heart attack.
- 4) It controls your blood sugar, therefore warding off Diabetes.
- 5) It prevents cancer.
- 6) It helps with regular bowel movements.
- 7) It helps you develop a strong immunity to illness and diseases.

One of the most impressive benefits of increasing your fiber intake is that it actually negates calories you've eaten for the day. Taking in more than 35 grams of fiber per day can help you take a 1700 calorie day and make it a 1400 calorie day, making weight loss a reality.

The Fiber Flush = 7 x grams of fiber = Total calories excreted in a bowel movement - the calories of the days total = your Net Calories. The "Fiber Flush" is 7 calories deducted for every gram of fiber consumed.

Calculating the Fiber Flush

7 X _____ Fiber grams = _____ Fiber Flush which is the total calories excreted in a BM
Total Calories = _____ (minus) the _____ Fiber Flush amount = _____ which is my Net Calories

How does it work?

Fiber absorbs calories and carries them out of the body as waste, so they aren't able to be stored as fat. In this way, fiber act as a natural fat blocker, much like the popular fat blocker pills available for weight loss.

If it's that easy we should all boost our fiber intake today and take in 35 or more grams of fat per day, right? Wrong! Adding fiber to your diet needs to be done gradually. Though fiber is a natural and healthy nutrient, it can also mess up your digestive system if you are not used to it and overload on it too quickly. Your body needs time to adjust to the increase in fiber and drink WATER!

How to Eat More, Feel Full, Weigh Less by Filling the Fiber Gap

When you think of fiber, chances are your weight isn't the first thing that comes to mind. But recent studies show the more fiber you eat, the less you tend to weigh. The reason: Part of it lies in satiety, or feeling full.

Fiber moves through your body more slowly than highly processed foods, making you feel full faster and satisfied longer. Most of us are only getting about half the recommended 35 grams of the filler-upper a day, though. Doubling up could cut 100 calories from your day—over a year, that adds up to 10 pounds.

So how do you fill the fiber gap? Try these Sure Things and Surprises—but be sure to note the Scams.

Sure things: your old fiber standbys

- Black beans: 15 grams per cup
- Cooked broccoli: 5 grams per cup
- Cooked oatmeal: 4 grams per cup
- Chickpeas: 10.6 grams per cup
- Dried plums: 12.4 grams per cup

Surprises: who knew they're so fiber-packed?

- Large Asian pear: 10 grams per pear, about double a regular pear
- Frozen green peas: 8.8 grams per cup
- Canned pumpkin: 7 grams per cup
- Avocado: 11.6 grams per avocado
- Artichoke: 9 grams per cup

Scams: less than 3 grams per serving

- Summer squash: 2.5 grams per cup
- Watermelon: 0.6 grams per cup
- Soft raisin granola bar: 1.2 grams per bar
- Brown rice cake: 0.4 grams per cake
- Romaine lettuce: 1 gram per cup

Conclusion: A healthy eating plan is one that —

- Eat more often. 5 to 6 times a day.
- Emphasizes on fiber - fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat free or low-fat milk and milk products.
- Includes Protein: lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts.
- Is low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars.
- Stays within your calorie needs.