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How Does Breakfast Impact Your Health?

Presented by:

You have no doubt heard the old saying “Breakfast is the most important meal of the day,” but aside from providing calories for energy, what are the other benefits of eating a morning meal? Research conducted on breakfast in the last decade shows how it may affect obesity, cravings, and nutrient intake. Breakfast also appears to influence the type of foods we select to consume during the rest of the day.

What Science Says

According to a 2011 survey about 10 to 12 percent of people in North America skip eating breakfast. Breakfast research has focused on a number of questions, including...

- Can breakfast lower your risk of disease?
- Do breakfast eaters snack less than breakfast skippers?
- Does eating breakfast help control body weight?

A study conducted in France showed people who consumed one quarter of their daily calories at breakfast were more likely to skip fatty food items and

boost their levels of vitamins and minerals compared to breakfast skippers. As well, the authors commented that “...breakfasts and cereal consumption were associated with lower serum cholesterols” in the breakfast eating group.¹

An advantage of eating a breakfast cereal rich in fiber is it lessens the risk of heart disease. Soluble fiber reduces the absorption of cholesterol into your bloodstream, and makes you feel fuller longer, so you often cut your overall daily calorie count. Breakfast cereals made from whole grains is a great way to increase your fiber intake, which should be about 1 ounce (25 to 30 grams) each day. Studies show that people who reach these levels of fiber intake slashed their risk of heart attack from 25 to 35 percent.²



QUESTION:

Breakfast eaters are more likely to omit which item?

- A) Fatty food
- B) Fish
- C) Cereal

ANSWER:

- A) Fatty food

QUESTION:

What did research discover about breakfast-eating teens?

- A) They ate healthier
- B) More physically active
- C) Lower body mass index
- D) All of the above

ANSWER:

- D) All of the above

TRUE OR FALSE:

Soluble fiber can reduce cholesterol absorption?

ANSWER:

True

Presented by:

A similar study, published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, revealed people who regularly ate whole grain breakfast cereals had a lower risk of heart failure.³

As well as fiber, one study showed that eating sufficient protein at breakfast can help you feel full. Research conducted at the University of Missouri used MRI scans on human test subjects, and the scans revealed a protein focused breakfast reduced brain signals controlling food “motivation and reward-driven eating behavior.”⁴ A protein heavy breakfast may curb snacking and assist people in losing weight more easily.

The medical journal *Pediatrics* conducted a study on adolescents and discovered over a five-year period teens that consumed a daily morning meal were more likely to eat healthier, be more physically active, and have a lower body mass index (BMI) than teens that skipped breakfast.⁵

Another adolescent study was initiated “to examine the association of breakfast and cereal intake with body mass index (BMI) and consumption of nutrients” by girls.⁶ The researchers found that girls regularly eating cereal was “related to increased intake of fiber, calcium, iron, folic acid, vitamin C, and zinc, and decreased intake of fat and cholesterol...eating cereal was predictive of lower BMI.”⁶



“Would You Like to See the Dessert Menu?”

One of the most surprising breakfast studies came out earlier this year. Researchers in Israel found that having dessert after a well-balanced 600 calorie breakfast of protein and carbohydrates actually helped dieters to lose weight and keep those extra pounds from returning. The study published in the medical journal *Steroids* followed obese participants for 32 weeks and discovered that those people who added a dessert (cookies, cake or chocolate) lost an average of 40 lbs (18 kilograms) compared to the participants who did not include sweets.⁷

What can explain this unusual result? The lead researcher noted that avoiding sweets completely can actually make psychological cravings stronger. Restrictive diets work initially, but as times goes by many dieters become weary of the deprivation and return to snacking on sweets throughout the day. A researcher commented: "...the group that consumed a bigger breakfast, including dessert, experienced few if any cravings for these foods later in the day."

* * *

When it comes to eating a well-rounded breakfast, you should include servings of whole grain, fruit or vegetables and a healthy source of protein. These choices will help deliver the energy to start your day, keep you feeling fuller longer, and prevent unhealthy snacking. Have questions about your diet? Ask your chiropractor!

Quote to Inspire

“All happiness depends on a leisurely breakfast.”

-John Gunther

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