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## **Breakfast: How to Make It Great, Without Being Late**

**By Kelly Healy**

Ever wonder why there is such an emphasis put on breakfast? What is so great about this morning meal that it has earned the reputation of being the “most important meal of the day?” Well, based on scientific research, it appears quite a lot!

Adequate nutrition is an important part of good health for people of all ages. It is of particular importance in helping kids to reach optimal growth and development. Studies focusing specifically on the benefits of eating breakfast for school aged children have found that a nutritious start to the day can have a positive impact on memory recall, standardized test scores, and attendance. Adversely, the findings show that children that don’t regularly eat breakfast often do not get the nutrients they need, have a higher tendency to be overweight and may not do as well academically and behaviorally in school.

Breakfast is equally significant for adults. People that start off their day with a well-balanced breakfast tend to have higher daily intakes of nutrients like calcium, iron as well as other vitamins and minerals, all which are needed for good health. Breakfast can also be an important part of maintaining a favorable weight. According to the National Weight Control Registry, 90% of people who have lost a significant amount of weight (30 pounds or more), and kept it off for a year or longer, report eating breakfast on “most days.”

If you are still not sold on breakfast, think about who looks to you as a role model. Many kids learn their eating habits from observing adults. By setting a good example, you are helping to pass on positive nutritional habits to your children.

Okay, so you get it that breakfast is beneficial for a variety of reasons. That still doesn’t mean there is any more time in the morning to prepare a nutritious meal. That’s where a little bit of planning comes in. A quick breakfast doesn’t have to mean hitting up the drive-thru, or grabbing a donut from the break room. By preparing foods in advance, you can have your healthy breakfast and eat it too!

The following are some quick tips to help make the most out of breakfast when you are short on time.

- Buy fruit that is frozen and blend it with yogurt, milk and/or ice to make a smoothie.
- Use liquid egg substitutes for a quick source of protein, minus the cholesterol and mess. Add low-fat cheese and a toasted English muffin for a take on-the-go meal.
- Low-fat string cheese and pre-cut fruit and veggies are great anytime finger-foods.
- Toast whole-grain frozen waffles for an almost effortless warm meal.
- Keep washed ready-to-eat, or peel-able fruit and vegetables in stock so you can grab them as you walk out the door.
- If you can, keep some food at work. If there's a kitchen you can bring perishables, otherwise a granola bar or fruit can easily be stored in your desk.
- Spread a thin layer of peanut butter on whole grain toast, or top it with cottage cheese.
- Who says sandwiches and wraps are only for lunch? Take a whole-wheat tortilla or pita and fill it with lean turkey, low-fat cheese and veggies, then hit the road!

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