

## Learn at Home: Nutrition Lessons for Healthy Living

# Breakfast

By choosing to complete this mail lesson, you have taken the first step in learning more about the importance of nutrition and its relationship to good health. Breakfast provides your body with the energy it needs to start the day.

To complete this lesson:

- Carefully read this lesson. It should take about 15-20 minutes to complete.
- Answer the questions included with this lesson.
- When you are finished, place the questions in the prepaid envelope and place the envelope in the mail.

### Breakfast (Breaking-the-Fast)

“Starting your day without breakfast is like trying to drive a car without fuel.” We have all been told “breakfast is the most important meal of the day.” Why do you think it is important for adults and children to have breakfast everyday? This mail lesson will discuss:

- Why is breakfast important?
- Where to start?
- Good breakfast tips
- Make time for breakfast
- What makes a healthy breakfast?
- Traditional healthy breakfast options
- Non-traditional breakfast options
- Breakfast on the run
- Read the label when shopping



### ♦ Why is breakfast important?

- By the time you wake up in the morning, it has been 8-12 hours since you have last eaten. When you are told, “breakfast is the most important meal of the day,” take note! By morning, your energy levels are low. Breakfast provides your body with the energy it needs to start the day.
- Breakfast helps you stay alert and can improve your mood and ability to pay attention.
- Eating breakfast improves your overall health and well-being. You will be less tired and sleepy in the mid-morning hours.
- Children that eat breakfast are more creative, do better in class, perform better on tests, and have fewer behavior problems.
- Adults who eat breakfast tend to do better at work, snack less, and get more nutrients each day than adults who do not eat breakfast.

- Research shows skipping breakfast does not help you lose weight. In fact, people who skip breakfast are more likely to be overweight.

### ◆ Where to start?

Start your day with a healthy meal. When it comes to choices, nothing beats a bowl of cereal. People who start their day with cereal eat less fat during the day, eat more fiber, and get more nutrients than people who do not eat cereal. Cereal is fortified with vitamins and minerals. It provides nutrients that may be missed at other meals. Drink the milk in the bottom of your cereal bowl to get even more vitamins and minerals! Choose cereals that are low in sugar, like bran flakes or oatmeal. If you like sugar coated cereals, try to eat them less often or mix them with healthier choices.

### ◆ Good Breakfast Tips

- Try to include foods from at least 3 food groups for breakfast. Example: 1 cup low-fat yogurt (**dairy group**), 1 medium orange (**fruit group**), and 1 slice of whole-wheat toast (**grain group**).
- Plan ahead to have food on hand so you do not have to skip breakfast.
- Choose cereals low in sugar.
- Save money by preparing breakfast at home instead of eating at a fast-food restaurant.

#### Let's compare the difference!

**Eating out:** \$2.35 for English Muffin, egg, cheese sandwich from fast food restaurant.

**Eating in:** \$0.79 for English Muffin, egg, cheese sandwich prepared at home.

By eating the same breakfast at home, you could save \$1.56 each day. Multiply that for the whole month – that's a savings of \$46.80.



### ◆ Make time for breakfast.

Breakfast does not have to take a lot of time. The main thing is to make it a part of your morning routine.

- Plan an easy breakfast, like peanut butter and jelly toast.
- Set out breakfast items like bowls, spoons, and cereal boxes before going to bed.
- Put homework, book bags, and lunchboxes in the same place every day.
- Make a “to-go” breakfast the night before. For example: peanut butter and jelly sandwich and a banana.
- Get up 10 minutes earlier.
- Stock your kitchen with quick-to-fix breakfast foods.

### ◆ What Makes a Healthy Breakfast?

- Try to eat a breakfast that includes foods from at least 3 of the 5 food groups.
- Limit breakfast foods that are high in sugar or fat, like sugar coated cereals, doughnuts, pastries, and fried foods.
- Choose foods with less sugar and fat, like unsweetened whole-grain cereals, pancakes, or waffles with fruit, and fat-free or low-fat milk.



If you do not like traditional breakfast foods, do not worry! Eat any nutritious foods you like for breakfast. There is no rule that says breakfast has to be eggs or cereal; just make sure it is healthy.

### ◆ Traditional Healthy Breakfast Options

- Bowl of cereal with low-fat or fat-free milk and fruit
- Peanut butter toast
- Pancakes or waffles with fruit
- Oatmeal with fruit and nuts
- French toast
- Hot cereal
- Eggs or a veggie omelet

## ◆ Non-Traditional Breakfast Options

- Sandwiches
- Slice of pizza
- Leftovers
- Fruit smoothies
- Tortilla with cheese and salsa
- Cottage cheese and fruit
- Soup



## ◆ Breakfast on the Run

- Grab some fruit and go
- Make your own trail mix: cereal, nuts and dried fruit (raisins)
- Glass of milk or breakfast shake
- Hard boiled eggs
- Apples and cheese crackers
- Whole grain muffins
- Low-fat or fat-free yogurt
- Bagel with peanut butter and raisins

## ◆ Read the Label when Shopping

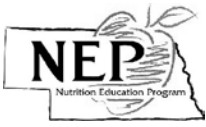
- Check the ingredients list. Many ready-to-eat cereals list sugar first. Look for cereals that list whole grain ingredients first, such as whole wheat.
- Look at the Nutrition Facts label. Choose cereals with less than 6 grams of sugar per serving.
- Look at the serving size listed on the Nutrition Facts label. What most people think is a serving, is often different than the serving size listed on the label. Be aware that you may be eating more than one serving.
- Buy store brands or no-name brands. They are usually cheaper than name brands and taste just as good.

After completing this lesson, you now know why “breakfast is the most important meal of the day!”



This material was funded in part by USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, call 1-800-430-3244.





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### Breakfast Questions:

1. **True or False.** Children who eat breakfast are more likely to do better in school and have fewer behavior problems.
2. **True or False.** Eating breakfast improves your overall health and well-being.
3. Why is breakfast the most important meal of the day?
  - a. Breakfast provides your body with energy
  - b. Breakfast keeps you alert
  - c. Breakfast improves your overall health and well-being
  - d. All of the above
4. **True or False.** Men and women who eat breakfast every day are less likely to be overweight.
5. **True or False.** It is a good idea to include 3 of the 5 food groups for breakfast.
6. People who start their day with breakfast are found to:
  - a. Eat less fat during the day
  - b. Eat more fiber
  - c. Get more nutrients than people who do not eat breakfast
  - d. All of the above
7. **True or False.** You should choose cereals **high** in sugar.
8. What are some ways to make time for breakfast?
  - a. Plan an easy breakfast, like peanut butter and jelly toast.
  - b. Make a “to go” breakfast the night before
  - c. Get up 10 minutes earlier
  - d. All of the above



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9. An example of a breakfast food that is healthy and quick is:
  - a. Doughnuts
  - b. Toast with peanut butter
  - c. Sugar coated cereals
  - d. Fried foods
  
10. The following breakfast example includes foods from which food groups? 1 slice whole-wheat toast with peanut butter, 1 cup milk, and 1 medium banana.
  - a. Grains, Dairy, Protein Foods, and Fruit
  - b. Protein Foods and Vegetable
  - c. Dairy, Grains, and Vegetable
  - d. Fruit, Vegetables, and Grains

**Mini Goals**

Setting goals is important when making healthy lifestyle choices. Please choose or create at least one mini-goal to complete *before your next* lesson.

**Based on what you have learned during this mail lesson, what is one lifestyle change you plan to make?**

**Do you have an idea for a mini-goal? Please share your idea with your NEP staff member!**

**For Office Use Only:**

Client's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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