



Another Look at the Importance of Breakfast

Dr. Charles Shaffer

One of the first questions I ask individuals who are struggling to lose weight is “what do you eat for breakfast?” More often than not their reply is “nothing”. Not only is breakfast the most important meal of the day, but it is a simple thing that will help you on your weight loss journey.

Skipping breakfast seems to be the norm for most people. The American Dietetic Association reported that the percentage of individuals who routinely eat breakfast greatly decreased between 1965 and 1991 and continues to decrease each year. Additionally, studies have shown that the majority of individuals who skip breakfast also make other questionable lifestyle choices, such as low levels of physical activity and high levels of soft-drink consumption. Skipping breakfast can be associated with poor performance on job duties and other tasks requiring concentration.

The most common reasons for missing breakfast are lack of time and hunger.

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When you break down the name of the meal, you can gather the importance of it. In the morning, it is time to “break the fast” by not eating overnight. Without this meal, your metabolism is not increased, therefore you will not be able to lose weight as easily. Not eating breakfast can become habitual and be harmful to your goal. However, this can all be undone by training your mind and body. Some patients complain that they are not hungry or feel sick to their stomach when they eat breakfast. The truth is, your body can adjust to this. Try eating a small amount every 1-2 hours for a few days instead of all of the required protein in one sitting. Over time, you will be surprised that you will be able to eat all of the recommended protein in one sitting. It is also worth noting that your health and energy will improve, which in turn will improve your job performance and concentration.

A study conducted in Sweden found that women of average weight and BMI eat more calories in the morning than overweight women. The National Weight Control Registry also showed that regular breakfast consumption is associated with successful maintenance of weight loss; leading most researchers to conclude that consuming few to no calories in the morning contributes to obesity. Finally, the Journal of Nutrition found that weight loss was more significant when a single meal is eaten.

By now, you should realize that breakfast increases the metabolic rate. More so when a meal of equivalent calories, carbohydrates, protein and fat is eaten in the evening. A 6 week weight loss study showed more significant weight loss with large morning meals than large evening meals. The Weigh Station recommends this meal to be primarily protein with very few carbs. However, the point of these studies and this article is to nail the idea that breakfast is needed in order to lose weight, maintain weight loss, and prevent weight regain.

Other studies found that skipping breakfast over a long period of time increases the risk of heart problems and overall health issues by making your body use sugar and insulin differently. Additionally, lipids can be processed abnormally and excess fat tissue will begin to form. How does this all work? Research points to insulin. Increased levels of insulin promote fat storage and thus prevent fat loss. Insulin response increases after skipping meals, but is more prevalent when the first meal of the day is missed. Thus, eating breakfast can lower your insulin level and therefore allow more weight loss when you are eating the right foods. This is true for children and adults of all ages.

Eating breakfast keeps us from “starvation eating” later on. When you don’t eat breakfast, you are essentially fasting for 15-20 hours. In turn, you are not producing the enzymes needed to metabolize fat to lose weight and are storing it due to the exaggerated insulin response. Most people who skip breakfast eat more calories during the day and eat a more significant amount of their calories in starches.

Some other helpful tips for eating breakfast include:

1. You don't have to eat traditional breakfast foods. Most of these have carbs- some exceptions are eggs, sausage, ham, and Canadian bacon. It is fine to eat turkey, chicken, steak, and fish for breakfast as well.
2. Juice does not count as a fruit!
3. Coffee does not count as a breakfast food.

Eating protein would significantly aid in weight loss, lower insulin level, and improve lipids. You will have more energy throughout the day if you EAT your breakfast. Remember, it is not "lunch-fast" or "break-supper" that we eat. So, start eating breakfast everyday and you will see a difference during your journey. Consider teaching your family to eat a healthy breakfast as well.

Shakes and bars are not the answer! If you need help with meal planning, please reach out to our staff and they would be happy to assist.

One last thought: please get vaccinated. As much as I am against government involvement in health care, this could save your life and others.

Be at peace. We are praying for you all to be happy and healthy.
Chuck Shaffer MD

The Recipe of the Month

Chicken and Zucchini Poppers

Ingredients

- 1 lb ground chicken
- 2 C grated zucchini
- 2-3 green onions, sliced
- 3-4 tbsp cilantro, minced
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 tsp salt
- 3/4 tsp cumin
- olive oil

Directions

Toss the chicken with zucchini, green onions, cilantro, garlic, cumin, salt and pepper. In a medium-sized pan, heat a drizzle of olive oil on medium heat. Use a small scoop to place meatballs into the pan.

Cook 8 - 10 at a time for about 5 - 6 minutes on the first side. Flip and then cook for an additional 4 - 5 minutes or until golden brown and the center is cooked through.



**Easy, Flavorful,
Fresh**

