Reasons to Eat Breakfast

By Dina Allen

I clearly remember the day I ran out of gas because I felt too lazy to stop at a gas station. My car kept slowing down, while I struggled to keep driving by just letting the car slow down and speeding up again without really enforcing the gas pedal, until fortunately, I reached a gas station. This is exactly how my body works when I skip breakfast. I was never a big breakfast eater and this was because I wasn’t really a fan of breakfast foods. Sometimes I got too lazy to prepare something I really liked. As long as I prepared something for the kids, I would rush out of the house, thinking that I would be able to hold off eating until lunch time. Some days, I would feel the worst headache or tiredness and then I would realize that it was around 1 pm and my stomach was still empty. Thus, just like a car, our bodies need fuel to be able to perform our daily tasks. Waking up in the morning and nourishing our body with the essential nutrients is the fuel that our body needs, to complete and achieve the daily goals we have to meet. Eating breakfast is beneficial because it starts our metabolism, helps us maintain a healthy weight, and also keeps us happy and motivated.

Normally, our body rests at night for about six to eight hours, so when up in the morning, our body is going to need a cue that warms up the metabolism so it is ready to work throughout the day. Eating breakfast in the morning, will allow us to signal our brain so it can get the digestion process started. When we skip breakfast in the morning, our body will then conserve the energy available which will in turn slow our metabolism and decrease the amount of calories burned during the whole day. Not eating in the morning means that our body has been through starvation for about more than 15 hours which will have an effect on how many enzymes are produced. Enzymes are key components of the metabolic process. Speeding up your metabolism, will increase the amount of calories that we burn throughout the day.

Skipping breakfast to save calories is not a good idea because this will lead to binge eating and having most of the calories later in the day. This is because, when we starve ourselves all night, and do not eat in the morning, we will be very hungry by lunch time. When we are hungry we tend to make poor choices when it comes to food by choosing foods that are high in fat, sugar and sodium which is not good for our health. It is very important that we
choose our breakfast food carefully to meet our nutrient needs. Having a breakfast that provides variety in nutrients is essential. This can be reached by eating whole grains like hot cereals with skin milk, eating raw fruits instead of fruit juice, or eating proteins like scrambled eggs, made with vegetables like onions and tomatoes. For people who have concern of eating too much eggs, protein needs can be reached by using soy milk which serves as a dairy serving and provides protein or having wheat toast with a spread of peanut butter. Many studies have been done to determine the effectiveness of eating breakfast in losing and maintaining a healthy weight. One study in particular, focused on strategies that helps people lose and keep the weight off, by eating breakfast, engaging in physical activities, and maintaining a consistent eating pattern among them.¹

Having breakfast can improve our mood by providing the energy necessary for daily functions. When we feed our body in the morning, using a breakfast meal that is balanced, will keep us happy throughout the day. It is necessary that our breakfast includes carbohydrates such as fruits and whole grains because these provide our bodies with energy. Also having meals that provide fiber will leave us more satisfied. A meal that consists of bacon, toast, or sugary baked goods will more likely leave us feeling heavy and grumpy, than a meal made with smoothies made with fresh fruits or oatmeal topped with fresh berries. My motto is that foods that are fresh will often leave us feeling fresh and bright. Of course, I have learned over the years that nutrition does not mean cutting all the foods we like, as long as we have it in moderation.

Sometimes our lives are busy and we rationalize by saying that we do not have enough time to do a lot of things. The reality is that, if planned ahead, a healthy breakfast meal can be enjoyed in the morning, whether before leaving the house, on the go, or at work. Time management is crucial in leading a healthier choice or lifestyle. Things like getting enough sleep, preparing or planning our breakfast food the night before, or having foods that are handy like apples, bananas, or yogurts are all ways to increase the possibility of having time for breakfast.

**Recommendation for quick breakfast meals:**

- Low-fat yogurt with fresh fruits (blueberries, granola can be added)
- Oatmeal made with skin milk and fresh fruits (any other hot cereal can replace oatmeal)
• Egg omelet with spinach, onions, tomatoes, and flaxseed
• Fruit and vegetable smoothie using soy or almond milk (can be combination of spinach, carrots, bananas)
• 100% whole-wheat toast with peanut butter
• An apple with peanut butter as a spread

Just as we have to take care of our cars and keep them filled with gas, we have to take care of our bodies and keep them nourished with the essential nutrients. Eating a healthy breakfast can speed our metabolism, boost our mood and motivate us to include more physical activities in our lives. After all, we serve as examples for our children and younger siblings, and nothing is more rewarding than seeing and knowing that they are healthy and energetic, and full of life.

Reference