

BREAKFAST



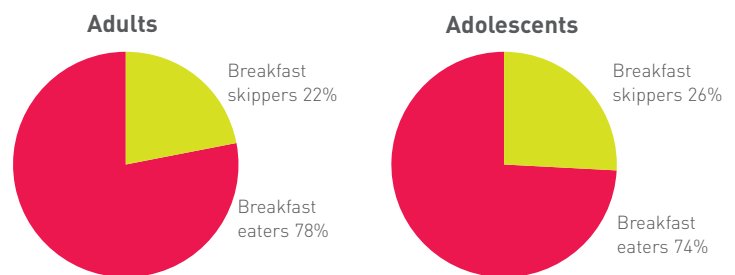
What is breakfast?

Breakfast is the first meal of the day and is when we break the overnight fast. Starting the day with a nutritious breakfast is a simple way to make a difference to your overall well-being as well as your ability to function well over the day.

Breakfast means different things to different people, from croissants to noodle soups. While eggs and bacon were once a traditional breakfast in Australia, many Aussies now eat breakfasts based on cereals, fruit and bread – and the nutritional quality of breakfasts has improved dramatically.

Breakfast habits in Australia

While nutritionists recommend eating a healthy breakfast every morning, a lot of people still do not realise how important it really is. According to the 1995 National Nutrition Survey, on average, nearly 1 in 5 Australian adults skip breakfast at least 3 days per week, while 1 in 4 adolescents go to school hungry.¹ Also, according to the 2007 National Children's Nutrition and Physical Activity Study, 1 in 10 children skip breakfast regularly.²



Key: Breakfast skippers – people who skip breakfast at least 3 days per week
Breakfast eaters – people who consume breakfast regularly (at least 5 days per week)
Source: The 1995 Australian National Nutrition Survey¹

Why is breakfast important?

Break the fast, kick off the day – Breakfast is an important meal to refuel our bodies, especially our brains, after the overnight fast.

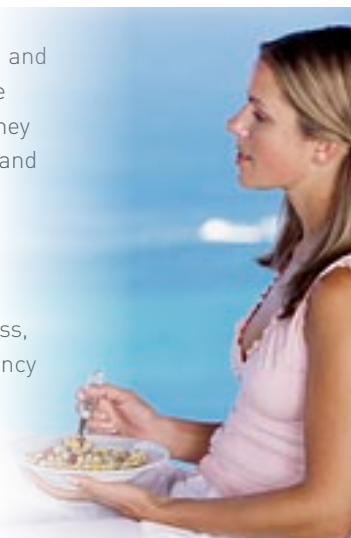
Boost your nutrient intake – Breakfast eaters generally have better overall diet quality, higher intakes of fibre, calcium, iron, folate, riboflavin, vitamin A and C and zinc and decreased intake of fat. Including fortified ready-to-eat cereals at breakfast can make a significant contribution to your daily nutrient requirements.^{1, 3, 4}

You miss it, you lose it – Research shows that breakfast skippers usually do not make up the missed nutrients later in the day.^{3, 5} Also, many teenagers are dropping regular breakfast eating habits, which means they are missing out on nutrients and energy at a very important stage of growth and development.¹

Make healthy food choices throughout the day – Research shows that children and adolescents who eat breakfast are more likely to make healthier food choices. They are also less likely to snack on high fat and sugary foods throughout the day.³

Perform better – Breakfast eaters are shown to have improved short-term memory function and increased alertness, which may facilitate learning and efficiency at work or school.^{3, 6}

Boost your mood – Breakfast is also associated with a more positive mood, calmness and lower feelings of stress.⁷





Breakfast eaters are less likely to be overweight

Surprising as it sounds, missing breakfast is not an effective way to lose weight. Research shows that eating breakfast plays an important role in weight reduction and successful weight maintenance. It's not entirely clear why this is so, but the fact that the body burns up breakfast more efficiently than meals eaten later in the day could be a factor.⁸ It could also be because a breakfast that is high in carbohydrate is satisfying and can lead to a lower fat intake and limit energy intake.⁹ Also, adolescents who skip breakfast are shown to have lower levels of physical activity, which may affect energy balance and contribute to excessive weight gain.³

Breakfast cereals – why they make a great breakfast

People who eat breakfast cereals regularly:

- make better food choices over the rest of the day³
- have better diets overall³
- have lower cholesterol levels¹⁰

Breakfast cereals are a healthy choice because they:

- are usually high in carbohydrate
- are mostly low in fat
- can be a good source of fibre⁴

- are satisfying (especially the higher fibre cereals)
- can be sources of vitamins and minerals, including folate, B vitamins, vitamin C, iron, zinc and magnesium¹¹
- are convenient and therefore make it easy to get the benefits of breakfast
- encourage milk consumption, which provides calcium, protein and other nutrients

Did you know?

Breakfast cereals alone provide 12% of the daily dietary fibre requirement of adults, but only contribute 3.5% of the overall daily sugar intake. People older than 65 years, who are the greatest users of bran cereals, obtain more than 15% of their dietary fibre from breakfast cereals.⁴

What is a nutritious breakfast?

To make the most out of your breakfast, it should include a variety of nutritious foods such as high fibre breads and cereals, fruit and low-fat dairy. Avoid foods high in fat, sugar and salt. Ideally your breakfast should contribute to around 25% of your daily energy requirement.

Sample breakfast ideas

At home

- Fibre containing cereal topped with fresh or canned fruit and/or low-fat milk or fortified soy products
- Wholegrain toast with baked beans and a small glass of fresh fruit juice
- Low-fat yoghurt sprinkled with natural muesli

On the go

- Wholegrain cereal bar and a fresh fruit juice
- A piece of fruit and a glass of low-fat milk

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For further information, please contact:



Facts for Life

Australia

Kellogg's Nutrition
Advisory Service
Kellogg (Aust) Pty Ltd,
41-51 Wentworth Avenue
Pagewood NSW 2019
Telephone 1800 000 474

New Zealand

Kellogg's Nutrition
Advisory Service
PO Box 9598,
Newmarket, Auckland
Telephone 0800 881 889

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