



Ontario Home Economics Association

Back to School ~ Back to Breakfast!

The first meal has long been considered the most important food of the day. Studies indicate that foods that 'break the fast' need to provide optimal levels of energy and endurance, aid in concentration and fuel the brain which improves attitude and overall performance. Breakfast is essential for students to learn, to be more alert and to perform better on tests. A healthy breakfast helps everyone face the challenges of work and stress. Aim to have breakfast include selections from three of the food groups to provide carbohydrates for brain power and protein for stamina. Home Economists agree that breakfast is much too important to be overlooked.

Get into the breakfast habit at home to ensure that your nutritional requirements are met every morning. Start your day on the right foot ~ rev up your metabolism and be ready to go! Don't always wait until you are at work or at school to have breakfast as that can be two or three hours after you get out of bed. Fuel up early to give your muscles the energy to get moving.

Many fast food breakfasts and commercial muffins pack a whopping number of calories and artery-clogging fats and they can leave you feeling hungry. Instead, choose a superior breakfast which is much healthier and also more economical than eating out.

Superior Breakfasts

Orange juice, high fibre muffin with low-fat cheese or 1 tbsp almond butter

Fresh fruit, whole grain toast, 1 poached egg, skim milk

Bowl of oatmeal with raisins or fresh blueberries, low-fat milk, cranberry juice

Inferior Breakfasts

No food at all
Coffee with cream and sugar

Most retail fast food, most store-bought muffins, cinnamon buns, oversized bagels (can be equivalent to 3-5 slices of bread)

Commercial cereal bars, donuts or coffee cake, which are generally low in fibre and high in trans-fats and sugar

***“No time for breakfast” is a common complaint.
Professional Home Economists offer
helpful tips and tricks
to help make breakfast a regular habit.***

Tips to Help Families Cope with the Breakfast Rush Hour

Plan Ahead

- Get organized. Go to bed the night before knowing what is on the breakfast menu. Planning ahead can be as simple as setting the table or checking on supplies of juice, milk or cereal.
- Have healthy choices on hand for family members who need to 'grab and go'!
- Set your alarm 10 minutes earlier ~ that's all the time it takes for breakfast.
- Save favourite brunch-style dishes for weekends when time is not at a premium.

Keep Quick and Healthy Choices On Hand

- Fresh fruit ~ washed and ready to eat at the table or en route
- A variety of high fibre, low-sugar cereals, such as Shredded Wheat or Cheerios
- Homemade muffins (wrapped individually) to tuck and take, as needed
- Individually sized low-fat yogurt cups
- Whole grain crackers, whole wheat pita or rye crisp bread if no time for toast
- Low-fat cheese cut and wrapped in individual servings
- Small cartons of milk or 100% juice with a straw
- A handful of nuts or pumpkin seeds mixed with raisins in a snack-sized bag
- Dried fruit such as apricots or cranberries, individually packaged
- Oatmeal to cook in the microwave ~ sliced bananas or blueberries for toppings
- Cottage cheese, hummus or peanut butter to spread on a whole grain bagel
- Homemade breakfast bars ~ lower in fat and sugar than store-bought

Be Flexible

- If eating together as a family is your goal, perhaps that ideal is not practical on weekdays. Nutritional needs can be met with healthy take-along foods.
- A good breakfast does not have to be a big breakfast. If a child isn't ready to eat when food is offered in the morning, relax. Provide healthy choices to eat on the bus or when hunger strikes.
- Change the breakfast menu often. Provide variety to satisfy all family members and to keep breakfast an interesting meal that no one will want to miss.

Set a Good Example

- Kids imitate others. As a parent, do you eat breakfast?

Tips from Professional Home Economists Donna Washburn and Heather Butt

As busy cookbook authors for celiacs, we feel it is vital to have a variety of quick and easy-to-eat breakfast items on hand. From the cereal group, have gluten-free, fruit-filled muffins prepared from amaranth, quinoa and other nutritious flours. Wrap individually and store in the freezer. Smoothies, yogurt cups and fresh fruit can round out a quick-to-prepare breakfast. Bread machine owners who bake with wheat can set the timer and have low-fat whole grain breads ready in the morning. Who can resist the aroma of homemade bread?

Tricks from Award-winning Cookbook Author Margaret Dickenson, P.H.Ec.

"We never miss breakfast in our home. Here are my 'seriously quick' but tasty tricks."

1. In a microwave-proof bowl, stir 1/3 cup (75 mL) quick oatmeal and 3 tbsp (45 mL) raisins into 1 cup (250 mL) cool water along with a pinch of salt and ground cinnamon and/or cumin. Microwave for 3 1/2 - 4 minutes, stirring once after 2 minutes and frequently until the end of cooking. Sprinkle with brown sugar and, if desired, chopped walnuts; add milk. Makes one serving. This tasty breakfast can be enjoyed at the table or "at the counter" in 2 minutes flat.

VARIATION: Cook the oatmeal the evening/day before. Enjoy it cold directly from the refrigerator, with brown sugar and milk. (My mother always said that "porridge" was as good as ice cream. She was right ~ especially if you add a drop of cream!)

2. A banana plus wedges of another fruit, a couple of prunes and a piece of cheese make an interesting last-minute "finger food" breakfast! (The prune-cheese combination is delicious.) It's a "no fuss" breakfast that is also conveniently portable. Include a glass of OJ.

3. For a rather extravagant treat, keep individually wrapped slices of smoked salmon on hand in the freezer. Transfer a slice or two (as necessary) to the refrigerator the night before. Spread a bagel or a slice of whole grain toast with cream cheese (e.g. plain, herb or salmon flavoured). Top with smoked salmon. Enjoy this quick breakfast trick either seated at the table or on the move.

4. Top yogurt with muesli or granola. Fresh berries make this instant meal even more special.

5. Cut a bran muffin in half. Top with peanut butter or a slice of cheese, or both!

Breakfast Ideas from Cookbook Author Anne Lindsay, P.H.Ec.

As a Founder and Director of the Breakfast for Learning - Canadian Living Foundation, Anne Lindsay continues to dispatch the important breakfast message.

"Good food choices help us to learn and concentrate. If you really don't have time to eat before you leave home in the morning, I suggest you drink a glass of orange juice and pack yogurt or cubes of cheese, a banana or apple and gorp (see below) or a bran muffin to eat on your way to work or school or when you have time. Pack a breakfast just as you pack a lunch. I always keep bananas and cheese on hand to grab when I'm hungry and running out the door."

GORP TO GO

1/4 cup raw almonds OR walnut halves	60 mL
1/4 cup Shreddies OR Bran Flakes cereal	60 mL
2 tbsp raisins OR currants	25 mL
4 chopped dried apricots OR figs	4

Mix together. Place in two separate snack bags to create two servings. Tuck into purse or back-pack to eat en route.

Author Ellie Topp, P.H.Ec. Offers a Family-Favourite Breakfast Cookie Recipe

“These delicious nutrition-packed cookies are great to eat on the run if breakfast time is limited.”

Fibre ‘N’ Fruit Breakfast Cookies

4 medium bananas, mashed	4
1/3 cup canola oil	75 mL
½ tsp almond extract	2 mL
Grated rind of 1 lemon	1
1 ½ cups quick-cooking rolled oats	375 mL
¾ cup whole wheat flour	175 mL
½ cup raisins	125 mL
½ cup chopped apricots	125 mL
½ cup chopped dates OR prunes	125 mL
½ cup chopped pecans, walnuts OR almonds	125 mL

In a large bowl, combine bananas, oil, extract and rind. Stir in oats, flour, raisins, apricots, dates, nuts. Mix well. Drop small spoonfuls onto a lightly greased baking sheet. Flatten with a fork. Bake in 350° F (180°C) oven for about 20 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove cookies from sheets immediately. Cool completely and store in freezer or refrigerator.

Makes 48 cookies

Recipe adapted from Eat-on-the Run Cookies, *Healthy Home Cooking*, by **Margaret Howard, P.H.Ec.** and **Ellie Topp, P.H.Ec.**, Canadian Home Economics Association. Macmillan Canada

Food Writer Jan Main, P.H.Ec. Proposes a Banana Peanut Butter Smoothie

“A classic combination, in drink form! Adaptable for lactose-free diets.”

1 banana, chopped	1
1 cup milk or lactose-free milk or fortified soy milk	250 mL
2 tbs smooth peanut butter	25 mL

In a blender, add all ingredients and blend until smooth. Pour into a glass and enjoy 3 food groups in one liquid meal.

Recipe adapted from *200 Best Lactose-Free Recipes* by **Jan Main, P.H.Ec.**, Robert Rose, 2006

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The Ontario Home Economics Association, a self-regulated body of Professional Home Economists, promotes high professional standards among its members so that they may assist families and individuals to achieve and maintain a desirable quality of life.

For further information, please contact:

Ontario Home Economics Association
14 Totten Place, Woodstock, ON N4S 8G7
Tel/Fax: 519-290-1843
E-mail: nancyohea@rogers.com
Website: www.ohea.on.ca