

Breakfast power

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Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. You have heard it from your parents, and may think breakfast is overrated or a few extra minutes of sleep are more beneficial.

Getting up earlier for breakfast is worth your time. Studies show that breakfast eaters are more alert and creative, perform better in school with improved test scores and are tardy less often (adults are more productive, too!). Breakfast eaters have fewer hunger-induced stomach aches in the morning. Other breakfast benefits include improved concentration, better problem solving and improved muscle coordination.

Breakfast means “breaking the fast.” Eating breakfast signals your body that you are awake and moving. As a result, it stimulates your metabolism, helping you burn more calories and be more alert.

Breakfast should include a carbohydrate and a protein. The carbohydrate will energize your body and brain for the day. The protein will maintain the energy and keep you going strong until lunch. Strive to include at least two to three food groups for breakfast.

Plan ahead for a breakfast at home or see if your school provides breakfast for students. Find out what your kids will eat and involve them in preparation. It will be easier and they will be more likely to eat it. Breakfast is the best way to start your day and your school year!

Try some **quick** breakfast ideas...

- 1 cup whole-grain cereal with ½ cup berries or small banana and ½ low-fat milk
- 1/2 whole-wheat bagel with 1 oz. low-fat cheese and fresh fruit
- 1 breakfast bar, ½ cup canned fruit (in own juice) with ½ cup milk
- 1 whole-wheat toaster waffle or toast with 1 Tbsp. peanut butter and 1 cup low-fat milk
- 1 piece fresh fruit, 1 cup milk and a small muffin (see recipe for Ice Box Bran Muffins)

Or try some **creative** breakfast ideas...

- Yogurt parfait: Layer 1 container low-fat yogurt, 1 cup fresh fruit (strawberries or blueberries) and sprinkle with ½ cup low-fat granola.
- Breakfast burrito: Roll up 1 scrambled egg, ¼ cup low-fat cheese and 2 Tbsp. salsa on a 6-inch, whole-wheat tortilla.
- Breakfast pita: Stuff a whole-wheat pita with ½ cottage cheese and fresh fruit.
- Power sandwich: Place 1 poached egg, 1 oz. Canadian bacon and 1 oz. low-fat cheese between two toasted whole-grain English muffin halves.

Ice Box Bran Muffins

Makes 4 dozen

1 cup 100% bran cereal

1 cup boiling water

2½ cups flour

½ tsp. salt

2 tsp. baking soda
1/4 cup butter, softened
1/4 cup olive oil
1½ cups sugar
2 eggs, beaten
2 cups buttermilk
2 cups all-bran cereal

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place muffin papers in muffin tins; set aside. In a bowl, pour boiling water over 100% bran cereal; set aside. In a separate bowl, sift together flour, salt and soda. In another large bowl, cream together butter, oil and sugar. Add eggs, buttermilk, flour mixture, all-bran cereal and 100% bran cereal. Fill muffin tins $\frac{3}{4}$ full with batter. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cover remaining batter and store in refrigerator to use within a few days. Do not stir refrigerated batter.

Per serving: 85 calories, 2.5 g fat, 2 g protein, 16 g carbohydrate, 2.5 g fiber, 149 mg sodium

If you would like more information about nutrition and healthy eating, please call the Gundersen Lutheran Nutrition Clinic at (608) 775-3447 or go to gundluth.org/Nutrition.