

healthy habits

+ Diet Habit: Sip Smartly p. 101

+ Beauty Habit: The Power of Oats p. 92

EAT BREAKFAST EVERY DAY

What you eat in the morning sets the tone for your day. Embrace this smart habit with our expert tips.

BY ALISON ASHTON

Despite what we've all heard from health advocates and Mom about breakfast being the most important meal, we're a nation of breakfast-skippers. Thirty-one million of us go without it, according to the market research firm NPD Group.

That's a bad dietary strategy, says nutrition expert Bonnie Taub-Dix, RD, author of *Read It Before You Eat It*. "Ditching breakfast can affect your mood, weight, and well-being." So this month we're tackling the three top excuses for skipping breakfast to help you make it a smart daily habit.



“There isn’t much time involved in mixing up some Greek yogurt, whole-grain cereal, nuts, and fruit.”

Top 3 Excuses For Skipping Breakfast

1 **“I’M NOT HUNGRY IN THE MORNING”**
 You don’t have to eat the minute you wake up. “Breakfast at a given time isn’t essential for health,” says David L. Katz, MD, founding director of Yale University’s Prevention Research Center. If you want to eat later in the morning, that’s OK. But waiting doesn’t mean skipping. Even a light snack with some protein, complex carbs, and healthy fats in the morning can help you resist those doughnuts a coworker “thoughtfully” brought to the office.

2 **“I’M TRYING TO LOSE WEIGHT”**
 Many dieters skip breakfast to “save” the calories. And a study published last year in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* did find that neither eating nor skipping breakfast had an effect on weight loss. Still, eating something in the morning may be important for weight control. Nearly 80% of members in The National Weight Control Registry, which tracks more than 10,000 people who have lost at least 30 pounds and kept it off for at least a year, eat breakfast daily.

“But eating breakfast isn’t just about your weight,” says Taub-Dix. It’s about dietary quality, too.

3 **“I DON’T HAVE TIME”**
 “There isn’t much time involved in mixing up some Greek yogurt, whole-grain cereal, nuts, and fruit,” says Katz. “If you prefer a later breakfast, pack it up and take it with you.” Taub-Dix’s favorite trick: Pull breakfast together ahead of time. “I usually make a big pot of oatmeal at the beginning of the week and keep it in individual containers. Then I can just take it out, add some milk and chia seeds, and pop it in the microwave.”



HABITS OF HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL BREAKFAST EATERS

Chefs, food activists, and moms face the same challenges as the rest of us when it comes to fitting in breakfast every day. Try some of their tips:

**MARK BITTMAN:
THE FOOD ACTIVIST**

Lean into leftovers. “I’ll cook extra vegetables or big batches of grains at dinnertime or the beginning of the week” and then microwave leftovers, says Bittman, whose latest book is *How to Cook Everything Fast*. “That’s so much easier than most typical breakfast foods.”

LISA LEAKE: THE MOM

Make your own convenience food. Leake, author of *100 Days of Real Food*, makes a big batch of granola each week. “I know what’s in it, and it really doesn’t take long at all,” she says. And if she fixes a big breakfast with pancakes or waffles on the weekend, she always cooks extra. “All of that stuff freezes beautifully,” says Leake.

**MARY SUE MILLIKEN:
THE CHEF**

Start small and go savory, says Milliken, a *Top Chef Masters* finalist and co-chef/owner of the Border Grill restaurants in Los Angeles and Las Vegas. She usually noshes on fruit, a bit of unsweetened granola, and some nuts before her early morning workout. That may be followed later in the morning by half a sandwich, a salad topped with a fried egg, or leftover rice with miso broth.