

Seasonal Eating
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Wake Up with Breakfast
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It's the most important meal of the day. Yes, breakfast. We think about what we will have for dinner or where we are going for lunch today but what about breakfast? Your body hasn't had any nourishment for about 12 hours and its ready to get going. Breakfast replenishes your supply of energy and other essential nutrients to keep your energy level up throughout the day.

Studies have shown that people who eat breakfast tend to eat about 100 fewer calories throughout the day. Breakfast skippers overcompensate at other meals. So set yourself up for a day of healthy eating and minimizing blood sugar swings by eating something every morning.



A good plan for breakfast combines complex carbohydrates (like whole grains and fruit) along with a protein. The carbohydrates give a burst of energy as they break down relatively quickly and enter the bloodstream. The protein breaks down more slowly, giving a longer feeling of fullness (satiety) and a slow release of energy to get you through to lunch without an energy slump. Add a low-fat dairy choice for added calcium and vitamin D for a complete breakfast.

Even if you are short on time in the morning, you can still have something to eat. The key is to plan ahead and have a well stocked pantry. Plan ahead and boil eggs to have in the refrigerator along with string cheese, fresh fruits, yogurt or even applesauce. Stock the pantry with healthy energy bars, ready-to-eat cereal, crackers and peanut butter for quick and easy weekday breakfasts. Weekends can be a time for more leisurely and creative breakfasts.

Yogurt with fruits and nuts or granola is a good and simple way to start the morning. Choose a low-fat plain or vanilla yogurt. You can add some honey and vanilla or almond extract for extra sweetness and flavor. The yogurt provides protein along with calcium and vitamin D. Top with your favorite fruit for more sweetness and some carbohydrates. Frozen or canned fruits work well for this and are easy to keep on hand. Frozen or fresh cherries, blueberries, strawberries or raspberries are good or canned peaches, drained and chopped make a good topping. Finally, sprinkle your yogurt parfait with toasted nuts like almonds or walnuts for healthy fats and more protein. You can also make a granola with nuts, oats and dried fruits to add crunch and variety to your yogurt parfait in place of just the nuts. The Maple Granola recipe below stores well in an airtight container to use all week.

So make a plan to carve out a few minutes of your routine to get something to eat each morning before you start the day. As you make eating breakfast a part of your daily routine, you will discover a new found energy and a kickstart to healthier eating. For more information and recipes check out the Seasonal Eating page at bedford.tennessee.edu.

Maple Granola

1 cup quick cooking rolled oats
1/4 cup slivered almonds
2 tablespoons shredded coconut
2 tablespoons sunflower seeds
2 tablespoons sesame seeds
2 tablespoons raisins or dried cranberries
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 tablespoons maple syrup
2 tablespoons brown sugar
2 teaspoons water
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

In a large bowl combine the oats, almonds, coconut, sunflower seeds, sesame seeds and raisins. In a medium size saucepan, heat the oil, maple syrup, brown sugar and water until it comes to a boil. Stir in the vanilla extract. Pour the liquid over the oat mixture and stir to coat. Spread the granola mixture into a single layer on a parchment paper or silicone lined jelly roll pan. Bake at 300 degrees for 35-45 minutes, until golden brown, stirring occasionally. Cool and break into chunks. Store in an airtight container.