

# What's the deal with breakfast?

May 31 2019, by Len Canter, Healthday Reporter

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(HealthDay)—A new research review published in the *BMJ* has added to the debate over the merits of breakfast. It has long been regarded as "the most important meal of the day"—and probably still is for growing

children—but what about adults who are trying to lose weight?

The theory has been that eating [breakfast](#) headed off rebound eating later in the day and into the night. But the new review found that, for weight loss, eating breakfast tended to slow dieting results and could even lead to consuming *more* calories later in the day.

Delaying the first meal seems to keep the body in the fat-burning mode set in motion once you stop eating the night before. Having a daily 16-hour food gap is what can speed [weight loss](#).

Contrast this with the findings of an earlier study published in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, comparing breakfast eaters to breakfast skippers. All were women between the ages of 18 and 45.

That study found both diet and mood differences between the two groups. Though everyone ate the same number of calories, the breakfast eaters scored higher in diet quality, getting more whole grains, fruits and key nutrients like folate, calcium and potassium. The breakfast skippers ate more saturated fat and sugar, especially at night, and these empty calories were associated with higher levels of daytime stress than breakfast eaters experienced.

The takeaway? The decision to eat breakfast should be tailored to your personal needs.

Remember: Breakfast doesn't have to be complicated. Start with a protein like cottage cheese, Greek yogurt, eggs, low-fat chicken or turkey sausage, or even quinoa. Add wholesome carbs—[whole grains](#), fruit, and vegetables—rather than breakfast pastries. Set aside a few minutes to focus on your meal and enjoy it.

If mornings are rushed, have whole grain toast with a nut butter, or prep the night before by making hard-boiled eggs or a batch of oatmeal that you can reheat in the morning or have cold with nuts and yogurt. Or buy single-serving cups of yogurt to grab with a whole fruit, like a banana or apple, on your way out the door.

**More information:** The USDA's ChooseMyPlate.gov has more [breakfast ideas](#) including small changes to get you started on smarter morning meals.

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