

Big breakfast bunkum

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Does eating a big breakfast help weight loss or is it better to skip breakfast altogether? Available information is confusing but new research published in BioMed Central's open access journal *Nutrition Journal* clears a path through these apparently contradictory reports.

Dr Volker Schusdziarra, from the Else-Kröner-Fresenius Center of Nutritional Medicine, conducted a study on over 300 people who were asked to keep a journal of what they usually ate. Within the group sometimes people ate a big [breakfast](#), sometimes small, and sometimes skipped it all together.

Schusdziarra said that "the results of the study showed that people ate the same at lunch and dinner, regardless of what they had for breakfast", this means that a big breakfast (on average 400kcal greater than a small breakfast) resulted in a total increase in calories eaten over the day of about 400kcal. The only difference seen was the skipping of a mid morning snack when someone ate a really big breakfast, however this was not enough to offset the extra calories they had already eaten.

The group addressed previous research, which suggests that eating a big breakfast reduces total calorie intake over the day, and showed that this data is misleading. This earlier research only looked at the ratio of breakfast calories to daily [calories](#) and in Schusdziarra's study this ratio seems to be most affected by people eating less during the day. In other words their breakfast was proportionally, but not absolutely, bigger. So it seems that there is no magic and that, unfortunately, in the fight for [weight-loss](#), eating a large breakfast must be counteracted by eating

substantially less during the rest of the day. In order to lose weight sensibly NHS guidelines suggest restricting calorie intake, cutting down on saturated fat and sugar, and eating 5-a-day fruit and veg.

More information: Impact of breakfast on daily energy intake – an analysis of absolute versus relative breakfast calories Volker Schudziarra, Margit Hausmann, Claudia Wittke, Johanna Mittermeier, Marietta Kellner, Aline Naumann, Stefan Wagenpfeil, Johannes Erdmann, *Nutrition Journal* (in press)

Provided by BioMed Central

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