



Healthy Breakfast Ideas and Recipes

What's the secret to a better breakfast?

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FROM THE WEBMD ARCHIVES 

It's better for your health (and your weight) to eat breakfast than to skip it. And it's definitely better to eat a healthy breakfast, high in fibers and nutrients, than one full of refined grains, sugar, salt, and/or saturated fat. But what if you're fresh out of healthy breakfast ideas?

One quick tip I use to keep my breakfast balanced is to "strive for five." That means I try to include at least 5 grams of fiber and 5 grams of protein in every breakfast.

Many people go wrong by eating a breakfast made up mostly of refined carbohydrates with very little fiber and protein -- like a refined-flour bagel, a muffin made with sugar and white flour, or a sugary low-fiber breakfast cereal. Balancing carbohydrates (preferably from whole grains, fruit and vegetables) with some protein and a little healthier fat will do a better job of staving off hunger until lunch and fueling your entire morning's activities.

To help you get there, here are some tips for making sure your breakfast is a well-balanced one, as well as some quick and healthy breakfast ideas and recipes.

A Healthy Breakfast Has at Least 5 Grams of Protein

Low-fat or nonfat dairy products can add protein to your breakfast, as can egg whites or egg substitute (egg yolk doesn't contribute protein); lean breakfast meats like Canadian bacon, extra-lean ham, turkey bacon, or light turkey sausage; and soy milk and other soy products. Here's how much protein you get from some typical breakfast foods:

| Breakfast Protein Sources | Protein (g) | Calories | Fat (g) | Saturated Fat (g) | Carbs (g) |
|---------------------------|-------------|----------|---------|-------------------|-----------|
|---------------------------|-------------|----------|---------|-------------------|-----------|

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| | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Low-fat yogurt, vanilla, 1 cup | 9.3 | 253 | 4.6 | 2.6 | 42 |
| Low-fat cottage cheese, 1 cup | 28 | 160 | 2 | 1 | 6 |
| Reduced-fat cheese, 1 ounce | 8 | 70 | 4 | 2.5 | 1 |
| Stonyfield Farms Organic Low-Fat, Fruit flavored | 7 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Egg substitute, 1/4 cup | 6 | 30 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Soy milk, low-fat, 1 cup | 4 | 90 | 1.5 | 0 | 14 |
| Soy-based sausage, 2 ounces | 12 | 119 | 4.5 | 0.7 | 6 |
| Tofu, extra firm lite, 2 ounces | 5 | 43 | 1.4 | 0 | 2.2 |
| Canadian bacon, 2 ounces | 12 | 89 | 3.9 | 1.2 | 1 |
| Extra lean ham, 2 ounces | 11 | 61 | 1.5 | 0.4 | 0.4 |
| Turkey bacon, 2 strips | 4 | 70 | 6 | 1 | < 1 |
| Light turkey sausage, 2 ounces | 9 | 130 | 10 | 2.2 | 1 |
| Peanut butter, natural, 1 tablespoon | 3.5 | 100 | 8 | 1 | 3.5 |
| Light cream cheese, 1 ounce | 3 | 53 | 4 | 2.7 | 1.8 |
| Lox (smoked salmon), 1 ounce | 5.2 | 33 | 1.2 | 0.2 | 0 |

A Healthy Breakfast Has at Least 5 Grams of Fiber

One way to get to those 5 grams of fiber is to include a whole grain and/or fruit or vegetables with your breakfast. Breakfast is the perfect time to work in a serving or two of whole grains, which along with fiber also offer many health-promoting vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals.

Get your grains at breakfast by having one of these:

- Hot oatmeal (or another hot whole-grain cereal).

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- 100% whole-wheat bread, small bagel, English muffin, or tortilla
- Pancakes and waffles made with at least half whole-wheat flour (you can also add oats, oat bran, or ground flaxseed for an extra nutrition boost).
- Muffins and cinnamon rolls made with at least half whole-wheat flour (you can also add oats, oat bran, or ground flaxseed).

Weekend breakfast tip: Make extra part whole-grain waffles, pancakes, or muffins during the weekend and freeze them in individual plastic bags for a quick breakfast. On weekday mornings, just pop them right from the freezer into the microwave or toaster/toaster oven.

Here's how much fiber you get from some typical breakfast foods:

| Breakfast Fiber Sources | Fiber (g) | Calories | Carbs (g) | Fat (g) | Protein (g) |
|---|-----------|----------|-----------|---------|-------------|
| <i>Grains:</i> | | | | | |
| Oatmeal, cooked, 3/4 cup | 3 | 124 | 21 | 2.7 | 4.5 |
| Whole-grain cereal, 1 cup (Like Raisin Bran) | 7 | 190 | 45 | 1.5 | 5 |
| 100% whole-wheat bread, 1 | 2 | 70 | 14 | 1 | 3 |
| Whole-wheat bagel (95 g) | 9 | 260 | 52 | 1.5 | 11 |
| Whole-wheat tortilla (114 g) | 8 | 300 | 54 | 4.5 | 12 |
| Whole-wheat flour, 1/4 cup | 4 | 110 | 23 | 0.5 | 4 |
| Oats, rolled, quick, 1/4 cup | 2.3 | 83 | 14 | 1.5 | 3 |
| Barley, med., cooked, 1/2 cup | 5 | 220 | 55 | 0.7 | 5 |
| Pearl barley, cooked, 1/2 cup | 3 | 97 | 22 | 0.3 | 2 |
| Buckwheat groats, cooked, 1/2 cup | 2.3 | 77 | 17 | 0.5 | 2.8 |

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| <i>Fruit:</i> | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|
| Banana, 1 | 3.1 | 105 | 27 | 0.4 | 1.3 |
| Blueberries, fresh, 1/2 cup | 2 | 42 | 11 | 0.2 | 0.6 |
| Raspberries, fresh, 1/2 cup | 4 | 32 | 7 | 0.4 | 0.7 |
| Dried fruit, mixed, 1/4 cup | 2 | 120 | 28 | 0 | 1 |
| Melon, 2 cups (cantaloupe or honeydew) | 3 | 108 | 26 | 0.3 | 3 |
| <i>Vegetables:</i> | | | | | |
| Mushrooms, cooked, 1/2 cup | 2 | 22 | 4 | 0.4 | 2 |
| Onions, cooked, 1/2 cup | 2 | 29 | 7 | 0.1 | 1 |
| Zucchini, cooked, 1 cup | 2.2 | 26 | 5 | 0.2 | 2 |
| Tomatoes, 1 med. | 1 | 25 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| <i>Nuts & seeds:</i> | | | | | |
| Ground flaxseed, 2 Tbsp | 3 | 80 | 4 | 6 | 3 |
| Pecans (or other chopped nuts), 1/4 cup | 3 | 205 | 4 | 21 | 3 |

11 Balanced Breakfast Examples

So how do you work these healthy foods into your breakfast when you're dashing out the door on a weekday morning? Try these 11 quick and healthy breakfast ideas:

1. A higher-fiber granola bar (like Fiber One chewy bars), a banana, and 8 ounces low-fat or skim milk. This breakfast will give you 365 calories, 67 grams carbohydrate, 12 grams fiber, 13.5 grams protein, 7.5 grams fat, 3.6 grams saturated fat,

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- 2.** 1 small whole-wheat bagel, 1 ounce reduced-fat cheese or 1 tablespoon natural peanut butter, plus 1 cup fresh fruit (like sliced strawberries). (384 calories, 65 grams carbohydrate, 12.3 grams fiber, 20 grams protein, 6 grams fat, 3 grams saturated fat, 15 mg cholesterol, 654 mg sodium.)
- 3.** Omelet made with 1/2 cup egg substitute, 1/2 cup vegetables, and 1 ounce reduced-fat cheese, served on 100% whole-grain English muffin. (288 calories, 35 grams carbohydrate, 7 grams fiber, 28 grams protein, 6 grams fat, 2.5 grams saturated fat, 15 mg cholesterol, 724 mg sodium.)
- 4.** Multigrain waffle topped with 1/2-cup fresh fruit and 1/4 cup plain yogurt with 1/8 teaspoon vanilla extract and a pinch of ground cinnamon stirred in. (265 calories, 48 grams carbohydrate, 8 grams fiber, 11 grams protein, 5 grams fat, 1 gram saturated fat, 12 mg cholesterol, 386 mg sodium.)
- 5.** Two slices French toast made with whole-grain bread and one egg (use a higher omega-3 type if possible) blended with 1/4 cup fat-free half-and-half or low-fat milk, 1/8 teaspoon vanilla, and a pinch of cinnamon. (278 calories, 42 grams carbohydrate, 5 grams fiber, 14 grams protein, 6.5 grams fat, 1.5 grams saturated fat, 215 mg cholesterol, 480 mg sodium.)
- 6.** Breakfast burrito made with 1 whole-wheat tortilla (weighing about 50 grams), 1/2 cup egg substitute scrambled with 1/2 cup assorted cooked vegetables, and 1 ounce of reduced-fat cheese. (304 calories, 32 grams carbohydrate, 6 grams fiber, 25 grams protein, 7 grams fat, 2.5 grams saturated fat, 15 mg cholesterol, 669 mg sodium.)
- 7.** Cooked oatmeal (1/2 cup "lower sugar" instant oatmeal cooked with 3/4 cup skim or low-fat milk), topped with 1/4 cup dried fruit or 1/2 cup fresh fruit and 1 tablespoon chopped nuts. (341 calories, 60 grams carbohydrate, 5 grams fiber, 13 grams protein, 7 grams fat, 0.5 grams saturated fat, 5 mg cholesterol, 365 mg sodium.)
- 8.** Breakfast sandwich made with 1 whole-grain English muffin, 1 1/2-ounces light turkey breakfast sausage and 1 ounce reduced-fat cheese. (300 calories, 28 grams carbohydrate, 5 grams fiber, 21 grams protein, 12 grams fat, 4 grams saturated fat, 83 mg cholesterol, 690 mg sodium.)
- 9.** Smoothie made with 6 ounces low-fat "lite" yogurt blended with 1 cup frozen fruit and 1/2 cup soy milk or low-fat milk. (230 calories, 42 grams carbohydrate, 6.5 grams fiber, 9 grams protein, 4 grams fat, 1 gram saturated fat, 5 mg cholesterol, 130 mg sodium.)
- 10.** Yogurt breakfast parfait made with 6 ounces low fat "lite" yogurt, 1/2-cup fresh chopped fruit and 1/2-cup low-fat granola. (302 calories, 65 grams carbohydrate, 7 grams fiber, 10 grams protein, 4 grams fat, 2 grams saturated fat, 4 mg cholesterol, 170 mg sodium.)
- 11.** Whole-grain cereal (1 cup) with 1/2-cup skim or low-fat milk and 1/2-cup fresh fruit (like blueberries). (276 calories, 62

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Healthy Breakfast Recipes

Here are five healthy breakfast recipes that will help you get your morning off to a great start.

Breakfast Cookies

Ingredients:

2/3 cup lite pancake syrup

1/4 cup dark brown sugar, packed, if you prefer them sweeter (optional)

3/4 cup smooth natural-style peanut butter

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1 large egg (use higher omega-3 brand if available)

1 tablespoon egg substitute or egg white

3/4 cup whole-wheat flour

6 tablespoons unbleached white flour

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1/4 teaspoon salt

3/4 cup rolled oats

3/4 cup dried fruit such as raisins, currants, or dried cranberries (optional)

2 1/2 cups higher-fiber toasted oat cereal rings (like Trader Joe's Organic High Fiber O's)

Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Coat two nonstick baking sheets with canola cooking spray or baking spray.
2. In large mixing bowl, combine pancake syrup, brown sugar (if desired), peanut butter, vanilla extract, egg and egg substitute (or white) and beat on medium until smooth.

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4. Stir in the oats and dried fruit (if desired) and toasted oat cereal by hand with spatula or spoon.
5. Drop a slightly heaping 1/4 cup of cookie dough per cookie onto prepared baking sheets (6-7 per baking sheet); flatten the cookie mounds to about 3/4 inches thick with a spatula. Bake for about 10 minutes or until cookies are lightly browned at the edges. Cool on cookie sheet or wire rack. Store in sandwich bags at room temperature up to 2 days or in the freezer up to two months.

Yield: Makes 12-14 jumbo breakfast cookies

WebMD Weight Loss Clinic members: Journal as: 1 small muffin + 1 teaspoon peanut butter OR 2 pieces "pancake, waffle, French toast"

Nutrition Information per serving: 214 calories, 8 g protein, 27 g carbohydrate, 8.5 g fat, 1.5 g saturated fat, 18 mg cholesterol, 5 g fiber, 196 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 35%.

Strawberry Summer Muffins

These muffins are delicious fresh from the oven. If you're in the habit of using butter or margarine on your muffins, try some light cream cheese on these instead.

Ingredients:

1 1/3 cup sliced fresh strawberries (or use frozen)

1/4 cup low-fat milk

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/2 teaspoon strawberry or raspberry extract (optional)

1/2 teaspoon red food coloring (optional)

1/4 cup less-fat margarine with the least amount of saturated/trans fat you can find (with about 8 grams of fat per tablespoon)

1/2 cup granulated sugar (add 1/4 cup more sugar or Splenda if you prefer it sweeter)

1 large egg, room temperature (use a higher omega-3 brand, if available)

1/4 cup egg substitute or 2 egg whites

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1/2 cup unbleached white flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

1/4 teaspoon salt

1 tablespoon powdered sugar for dusting the tops (optional)

Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a 12-cup muffin tin with cupcake liners; set aside. Place strawberries in a small food processor; process until pureed. Make sure you have 2/3 cup of puree.
2. In small bowl, combine 2/3 cup strawberry puree with low-fat milk, vanilla extract, strawberry extract and red food coloring (if desired); set aside.
3. In bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream margarine and sugar on medium-high speed until combined and fluffy. Reduce speed to medium-low and add the egg and egg substitute or egg white, beating just until blended. Scrape the side and bottom of bowl well halfway through.
4. With mixer turned off, in medium bowl, whisk together flours, baking powder, and salt; then add half of the flour mixture to the mixing bowl with margarine mixture, beating just until blended. Pour in the strawberry mixture and beat on LOW just until blended, scraping sides of bowl with spatula midway. Add in the remaining flour mixture, beating just until blended and scraping down sides of the bowl.
5. Add 1/4-cup of muffin batter to each prepared muffin cup. Bake until tops are just dry to the touch (about 22 minutes). Let cool completely in tin before dusting with powdered sugar, if desired.

Yield: Makes 11 muffins (5.5 servings of 2 muffins each)

WebMD Weight Loss Clinic members: Journal as 2 pieces "pancake, waffle, French toast" + 2 teaspoons sugar/honey OR 1 small muffin + 1/2 cup "unsweetened canned fruit in juice or unsweetened pureed fruit"

Nutrition Information per 2-muffin serving: 258 calories, 8 g protein, 47 g carbohydrate, 6 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 40 mg cholesterol, 4 g fiber, 260 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 20%.

Honey Wheat Buttermilk Biscuits

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2 cups unbleached white flour

1 teaspoon salt

4 teaspoons baking powder

2 tablespoons honey

1/2 cup less-fat margarine or whipped butter

1 1/2 cups + 2 tablespoons low-fat buttermilk

Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper (or coat with canola cooking spray).
2. In large mixing bowl, combine flours, salt, and baking powder beating on low speed until blended. Add honey and margarine or butter; beat on low until crumbly. Add buttermilk and beat on low just until dough forms.
3. Dust flat surface with a few tablespoons of unbleached white flour. Press biscuit dough out to about an 8- or 9-inch square (about 1 inch thick). Cut dough using a 2 1/2-inch biscuit cutter and place biscuits on prepared baking sheet. Reroll scraps only once. Bake until golden (about 18 minutes).

Yield: 10-11 biscuits

WebMD Weight Loss Clinic members: Journal as 1 piece "small muffin, coffee cake, biscuit" + 1 teaspoon honey OR 2 pieces "pancake, waffle, French toast"

Nutrition Information per biscuit (if 11 per recipe): 220 calories, 7 g protein, 39 g carbohydrate, 5 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 2 mg cholesterol, 3.3 g fiber, 447 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 20%.

Veggie Microwave Frittata (for two)

You can make this tasty breakfast dish for two in about 10 minutes. If you like, garnish each serving with fresh chopped tomato or salsa and/or avocado wedges.

Ingredients:

1 1/4 cup shredded frozen hash browns (the type with 0 fat grams per serving)

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- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley (or 1 1/2 teaspoons parsley flakes)
- 2 teaspoons olive oil or canola oil
- Pinch of salt and pepper (optional)
- 2 large eggs (use a higher omega-3 brand if available)
- 1/2 cups egg substitute
- 1/4 cup low-fat milk or fat-free half-and-half
- 1/8 teaspoon dry mustard
- Two dashes hot pepper sauce (like Tabasco)
- 1/2 cup shredded reduced-fat sharp cheddar cheese

Preparation:

1. In a microwave-safe 1-quart casserole dish, combine potatoes, carrot, onion, parsley, and oil. Cover and microwave on HIGH for 3 minutes, stirring after 90 seconds. Add salt and pepper, if desired.
2. In mixing bowl, combine eggs, egg substitute, milk, mustard, and hot pepper sauce by beating on medium speed for a minute or two. Pour egg mixture into casserole dish and stir to combine with potato mixture.
3. Cover dish (waxed paper will work) and microwave on HIGH for 2 minutes. Draw cooked egg toward the middle of dish and the liquid egg toward the edges and microwave on HIGH for 2 minutes more. Sprinkle cheese on top, and microwave until cheese is melted (about 30 seconds more). Let stand a few minutes before serving.

Yield: Makes 2 servings

WebMD Weight Loss Clinic members: Journal as 1 egg alone without added fat + 1 ounce low-fat cheese + 1/2 cup starchy foods with fat OR 1 portion frozen dinner light

Nutrition Information per serving: 280 calories, 20 g protein, 21 g carbohydrate, 13 g fat, 4.3 g saturated fat, 6.2 g monounsaturated fat, 1.2 g polyunsaturated fat, 218 mg cholesterol, 2.2 g fiber, 296 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 42%.

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If you want to use plain instead of vanilla yogurt, just stir in 1/8 teaspoon vanilla extract.

Ingredients:

1/2 cup diced frozen mango pieces

1/2 cup diced frozen peaches

1/4 cup sliced banana (optional)

6 ounces low-fat light vanilla yogurt (3/4 cup)

1/4 cup soy milk

1/3 cup low-fat granola

Preparation:

1. Add mango, peaches, banana, yogurt, and soy milk to small food processor or blender and pulse until smooth (mixture will be thick).
2. Spoon into serving glass or bowl and top with the granola. Eat with a spoon.

Yield: Makes 1 serving

WebMD Weight Loss Clinic members: journal as 1 cup low-fat yogurt sweetened with fruit + 1/2 cup unsweetened whole grain cereal

Nutrition Information per serving: 297 calories, 12 g protein, 60 g carbohydrate, 3.5 g fat, 0.2 g saturated fat, 1.3 g monounsaturated fat, 1.6 g polyunsaturated fat, 4 mg cholesterol, 7 g fiber, 174 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 10%.

Recipes provided by Elaine Magee; © 2008 Elaine Magee

Elaine Magee, MPH, RD, is the "Recipe Doctor" for the WebMD Weight Loss Clinic and the author of numerous books on nutrition and health. Her opinions and conclusions are her own.

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