Q: I usually skip breakfast. Why does everyone say it is so important?

A: No matter how busy your schedule, you should always start your day with breakfast! Eating breakfast daily has been correlated with successful weight loss and weight maintenance. According to the National Weight Control Registry, 78% of individuals who have maintained their weight loss of 30 pounds or more for at least one year eat breakfast every day.

Upon waking in the morning, our bodies are in a fasting state because we typically have not had food for at least eight hours. During a fasting state, our metabolism slows down and we burn fewer calories. Eating breakfast helps to stop the fast by jump-starting our metabolism, allowing the food we eat later in the day to be used more efficiently. Also, if we skip breakfast, we are more likely to overeat at lunch, or snack on foods throughout the day.

The important points to keep in mind when eating breakfast are:

1. Eat within an hour of waking up.
2. Keep breakfast around 300–500 calories, depending on your recommended daily calorie intake.
3. To prevent being hungry soon after eating, make sure you add protein to your breakfast, either in the form of dairy or other protein like eggs, peanut butter, nuts, or tofu.
4. Try to have two to three food groups present in your breakfast (ex., glass of milk with a piece of fruit, or whole-wheat toast with a scrambled egg).
5. If you aren’t a fan of the typical breakfast foods, you can still eat something in the morning! Choose foods that you enjoy and that meet the above recommendations.

Give your body the energy it needs in the morning by making breakfast a habit — you’ll be more likely to lose weight and keep it off!

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Sources: American Dietetic Association
www.eatright.org
National Weight Control Registry www.nwcr.ws