Fuel Your Body with Breakfast

Breakfast/noun/ is the first meal of the day (to break the fast). Breakfast is one of the most important meals because the food you consume replenishes and fuels your body. After 8-12 hours of sleep your body requires food to provide enough energy to sustain daily activities. Think of it... If you were going somewhere in your car and had no fuel. You couldn’t go anywhere without gas. Gas fuels your car just like food fuels your body. Without eating you may become tired, irritable, have trouble concentrating, get headaches and hunger pains.

The 2008-2009 NIU Dietetic Interns with the support of Health Enhancement, Recreation Services, and Dining Services have created a Breakfast campaign for resident hall students to raise awareness of the importance of eating breakfast. You might remember taking a Breakfast Survey last fall, noticed the TV and poster ads around campus or on the NIU buses, or participated in the banana giveaway. The Dietetic Interns/Nutrition Graduate Students have been promoting breakfast to inform students that eating breakfast can improve their academic performance, energy and concentration level, vitamin and mineral intake, immune system, and boost their metabolism. Studies have shown that college students that eat breakfast typically have a healthier body weight and eat fewer calories at night. Individuals that eat breakfast usually eat fewer calories over the course of the day. In addition, they are less likely to snack impulsively, overeat, and have late night snacks. Breakfast eaters typically eat more calcium and fiber and less fat and cholesterol. Breakfast should be a priority for individuals trying to lose weight due to the fact that skipping meals, especially breakfast, does not promote weight loss.

Start your day off right eating breakfast to get enough carbohydrates, protein, calcium, and fiber. Many college students do not eat enough whole grains or consume enough dietary fiber. Carbohydrates provide your body with energy. By eating whole grains you can increase your intake of vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants. Fiber helps you feel a sense of “fullness” to keep you satisfied which is essential for weight loss or maintaining a healthy body weight. Fiber also improves your overall health and can reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases including heart disease and some forms of cancer. Protein is significant in providing the body with sustainable energy and essential amino acids to maintain muscle mass. Calcium is crucial for bone health. It is essential that everyone eat balanced meals throughout the day to obtain enough nutrients. Try eating 3 different food groups which may include whole grains, fruits, and dairy products in the first meal of everyday. The bottom line is eating breakfast is a great way to fuel your body!

To learn more about ways to improve your health check out the Health Enhancement website at: http://www.niu.edu/health/ or join the Health Enhancement facebook group.

If you are interested in learning more about nutrition make a free one-on-one counseling session with the Dietetic Interns at the Recreation Center. Call: (815) 753-9416 or check out: http://www.niu.edu/recservices/nutrition/index.shtml

Written by Aubrey McNeff, Dietetic Intern & Nutrition Graduate Student

A healthy breakfast can be made in minutes!

Make breakfast a goal for everyday and try eating:
• Whole grain cereal with milk
• Instant oatmeal and blueberries
• Cooked eggs on a whole-wheat English muffin
• Multi-grain waffles with sliced bananas on top
• Yogurt topped with berries & granola
• An orange, banana, or apple
• A granola bar and a glass of milk
• A sandwich made with whole grain bread
• A fruit smoothie (see recipe)

Tips to help make breakfast part of your routine:
♦ Try to plan breakfast the night before
♦ If you don’t normally eat breakfast start small and eat grapes, drink a glass of milk or 100% fruit juice, or eat whole-wheat pretzels
♦ If you don’t crave traditional breakfast foods try eating leftovers from dinner the night before like pizza with a glass of orange juice

Fruit Smoothie

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>INGREDIENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 BANANA</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 STRAWBERRIES</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 ICE CUBES</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 CUP Cold MILK (Skim or 1%)</td>
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DIRECTIONS: Combine the banana, strawberries, ice, and milk in a blender; blend until smooth; serve immediately.