

Start your day with breakfast, it's important

With the break of day, it's time to restore our bodies after a long night's fast. That's the idea behind breakfast, which most health experts, and probably your mother, identify as the most important meal of the day.

Breakfast, more than any other meal, reminds us how important food is to fuel our bodies for the day ahead.

A good breakfast should strike a balance among different food categories.

About 60 percent of breakfast's calories should come from complex carbohydrates, since these provide the fuel you need to get roused up and going. Oatmeal, bran muffins and buckwheat pancakes are just a few of the whole grain options that are especially fiber-rich. For something a little different, try bulgur cooked with apple juice, cinnamon and raisins, and topped with tart apple slices.

Protein is also important at breakfast, since it helps the body maintain and repair itself and adds an alertness kick we can all use in the morning.

You don't need a lot of protein, however. The milk you put on cereal is enough to get your brain in gear and it also provides part of your daily calcium and

vitamin D requirements.

To get a good start on the five or more daily servings of fruits and vegetables that the American Institute for Cancer Research recommends we eat for good health, it's smart to include a few servings at breakfast. Simply add a fruit topping to cereal, pancakes or yogurt, drink a glass of fruit or vegetable juice, or blend fruit into a breakfast beverage in your food processor.

How about a shake made with banana, peaches, buttermilk and orange juice, garnished with fresh strawberries? Or, warm wheat berry bread, spread with homemade apple-rhubarb butter with a wedge of cantaloupe on the side?

Although nearly one in four U.S. adults regularly skip breakfast, those who take time to eat in the morning are eating healthier than ever before — consuming less fat and more fruits and whole grains. Consumption of whole

milk, bacon, eggs, butter, margarine and white bread are down, while the consumption of lower-fat milk, whole grains, and lower-fat quick breads has increased. We're eating more ready-to-eat cereals as well, with greater increases among higher

fiber cereals. The trend is toward better breakfasts

— and starting the day off right is an important link to sound nutrition and good health.

WHOLE WHEAT BLUEBERRY BISCUITS

- 1 cup all purpose flour
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup soft margarine
- 1 cup blueberries
- 1 cup skim or 1 percent buttermilk or sour milk

In bowl, combine all-purpose and whole wheat flours, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Using fingers, rub in margarine until mixture resembles coarse crumbs.

Stir in blueberries; add buttermilk and mix lightly. Drop by spoonfuls into 10 mounds. Bake in 425° F. oven for 12 to 15 minutes or until golden brown.

Nutrition information: Each of the ten biscuits contains 150 calories and 5 grams of fat.

Information and recipe from the American Institute for Cancer Research.



Breakfast treat: Whole wheat blueberry biscuits are a delicious way to start your day.

Banana pancakes with compote simply delicious for brunch

AP — Treat your family to a mouthwatering and healthful homemade breakfast or brunch. Consider putting Banana Pancakes and Warm Fruit Compote on the menu.

These simple recipes are adapted from the second edition of the Culinary Institute of America's "The Professional Chef's Techniques of Healthy Cooking" (John Wiley), scheduled for publication next spring.

Serve the pancakes with Warm Fruit Compote and low-fat breakfast sausage.

BANANA PANCAKES

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2/3 cup oat bran
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 1/2 cup nonfat plain yogurt
- 1/2 cup mashed ripe banana (about 1 medium)
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 4 egg whites

In a large bowl, combine flour, oat bran, sugar, baking powder, salt, cinnamon and ginger. In a separate bowl, combine water,

yogurt, banana, 1 tablespoon of the oil, and vanilla.

Add wet ingredients to dry ingredients and mix just until incorporated. Beat egg whites until they form soft peaks. Stir about 1/2 of the whites into the batter, then gently fold the remaining whites into the batter.

Use the remaining oil to lubricate a griddle, or use a large non-stick skillet (see note). Heat the griddle or skillet over medium heat. For each pancake, ladle 1/3 cup of the batter into the heated pan. Flip each pancake when the edges look dry. Cook until golden-brown on each side. Serve with Warm Fruit Compote.

Makes about 16 pancakes for 4 servings.

Note: Use a brush to apply a thin film of oil and then rub away any excess with a clean cloth. Nonstick griddles or pans will not require additional oil.

Nutritional facts per serving: 290 cal., 11.5 g pro., 8.5 g fat (0.8 g saturated fat), 45 g carbo., 656 mg sodium, 0.5 mg chol., 4 g fiber.

WARM FRUIT COMPOTE

- 1/2 cup fresh or frozen raspberries, strawberries, or blueberries
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 2 teaspoons dry or sweet white wine

1/4 teaspoon Kirschwasser (optional)

1-1/4 cups mixed seasonal fruits of your choice

1/3 cup peach or apricot nectar

2 teaspoons grated orange zest

Thaw berries if frozen. Puree berries, honey, wine and Kirschwasser in a blender.

Strain puree through a fine mesh sieve. Simmer puree with remaining ingredients in a small sauce pan until thickened.

Makes about 1 cup for 4 servings.

Nutrition facts per serving: 60 cal., 0.5 g pro., 0.2 g fat, 15 g carbo., 2 mg sodium, 0 mg chol., 2 g fiber.

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