

# Healthier Living

## Breakfast, Nutrition And Stress Management

by Molly Kimball, RD, CSSD

(NAPS)—When it comes to how you start your day, it turns out Mom was right—breakfast really is the most important meal.

A healthy and balanced breakfast gives your body the energy it needs to perform its daily functions. In turn, your body is able to better maintain optimum blood



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sugar levels, improve focus and attention, maintain metabolism and boost immunity.

Unfortunately, too many people start their day with an excuse instead of breakfast. As a registered dietitian and nutritionist for the

past 10 years, I've heard them all:

- I don't have time
- I'm not hungry in the morning
- It makes me hungrier throughout the day
- I'm fine with just coffee.

If any of these excuses sounds familiar, you are not alone. Studies show that nearly half of all Americans are skipping breakfast.

### Stress And Your Diet

In addition to providing more energy, breakfast can also help regulate the hormones that control our moods—which can help combat stress and anxiety. In fact, some say one of the easiest ways to get a handle on stress is to make a healthy breakfast part of your day.

For instance, one option for a quick and nutritious breakfast is a fruit smoothie. It's easy to toss your favorite fruits with nonfat milk or yogurt in a blender at home for an easy-to-consume meal on the go. Or, pick one up on your

way to work or school. All Smoothie King locations are now open at 7 a.m. on weekdays, making it even easier to choose wisely.

My breakfast favorite there is the blended Mocha Coffee Smoothie made "skinny." In the 20-ounce size, this blend gives me the tasty coffee flavor I enjoy in the morning with only 160 calories and 13 grams of carbohydrates. Plus, it's low in fat and has more protein than two scrambled eggs.

Other good breakfast smoothie choices are the protein-rich Strawberry Shredder or Low-Carb Banana.

### The Importance of Protein

Protein is an important component of a healthy breakfast because it takes longer to break down in the body, keeping you feeling fuller longer. Plus, it helps increase alertness, helping you to focus better at work or school.

While smoothies are one of the easiest ways to incorporate protein at breakfast, other good choices include eggs, peanut butter or cheese on whole wheat toast, milk, yogurt, or soy products.

Many foods also come fortified with protein. Smoothie King's breakfast muffins include 15 grams of protein and 43 grams of carbs—the nutritional equivalent of two eggs, a slice of toast and a glass of juice.

With so many quick and nutritious options available, replace those excuses with a balanced breakfast to fuel your day and help ease your mind.

*Molly Kimball is a sports and lifestyle nutritionist, advising clients on reducing body fat and building muscle, endurance training, disordered eating, and general health and wellness.*