

Miss Breakfast And You Miss A Lot TM

(NAPSA)—Over the past 15 years, the rate of breakfast skipping in the United States has doubled even though scientists have discovered more and more benefits from the simple act of eating a bowl of cereal. For instance, scientists have linked a lower body weight to those who choose cereal for breakfast. Better yet, choose a whole-grain cereal, and you can add on such potential benefits as a reduced risk for heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

So don't get caught in the trap of skipping breakfast. Scientists have even linked it to better performance throughout your busy day. People often say they skip breakfast because they want to lose weight, but the reality is that eating breakfast can actually help a person lose weight while skipping breakfast simply backfires. And what could be more convenient, nutritious and inexpensive than a quick bowl of cereal in the morning? The payback is tremendous for the few minutes it takes to have breakfast.

Based on a growing body of research, there are some very good reasons to rise and dine.

Healthier diets

"Miss breakfast and you miss out on a number of vitamins and minerals," said Dr. Theresa Nicklas, a professor at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston and one of the country's leading experts on the benefits of breakfast. "Not only do you miss out on getting these nutrients in the morning, our studies show that breakfast skippers do not make up for the loss of critical nutrients people can get from breakfast and may even overeat fatty, high cholesterol foods later in the day."

Children and adults who eat breakfast tend to have diets that are higher in calcium, zinc, magnesium, iron, folic acid and vitamins A, B6 and D. A number of studies, including those done by Dr. Nicklas at the Baylor College of Medicine, have found that eating ready-to-eat cereal at breakfast offers a definite advantage in consuming higher levels of vita-

mins and minerals. Cereal eaters are also inclined to have diets containing less fat and cholesterol. Choosing whole-grain cereals may boost benefits even more. New research shows that the antioxidant content of whole-grains rivals that of many fruits and vegetables.

Better weight control

Breakfast eaters have the upper hand here as well. Data from the National Weight Control Registry—an ongoing study of people who have lost a significant amount of weight and kept it off—shows that eating breakfast is an integral part of most members' success. Nearly 60 percent "always" or "usually" eat cereal as part of their routine to stay slender.

Children are affected by the breakfast-weight link too. A study of 13-year-olds found that breakfast skippers were more likely to be unhappy with their body shape than those who ate breakfast. Kids who skipped breakfast were also more apt to have been on a diet to lose weight.

Healthier hearts?

There may be a connection here. A study of adults in Japan found that men who skipped breakfast tended to have higher blood pressures than men who ate a morning meal. The women in the study who did not eat breakfast were more likely to have higher cholesterol levels than those who ate breakfast. Those who did not eat breakfast were also apt to smoke more and exercise less.

Kathy Mackin, mother of three, believes in the benefits of breakfast for her family.

"We're committed to it. Eating breakfast makes such a difference in our energy level. It's usually not an elaborate event—just something healthy that will get us going for the day."

A Great Start to Total Nutrition—Choose healthy foods to maximize breakfast's magic. Include ready-to-eat cereal, fruits or vegetables, low-fat dairy products and whole grains, such as whole wheat bread or a whole-grain cereal.