

Total Nutrition

Looking for a Great Way to Watch Your Weight? Starting With A Bowl Of Cereal Can Get You There

(NAPSA)—A growing number of studies are showing that breakfast—especially a cereal breakfast—is associated with slimmer bodies and better weight control.

Some of the best arguments for the breakfast-and-weight link come from the National Weight Control Registry (NWCR)—an ongoing study of people who have lost a significant amount of weight and kept it off. Eighty percent of the registry's 3,000 members eat breakfast. These people, on average, have lost at least 30 pounds and maintained that loss for more than a year.

What's the link with breakfast?

Often dieters skip breakfast hoping to trim a few calories first thing in the morning. But, researchers believe eating in the morning may reduce hunger later in the day—hunger which might otherwise lead to overeating. Janet Wilson, a self-proclaimed yo-yo dieter fully understands that concept. "When I skip breakfast, I get so hungry that by lunchtime I've either eaten junk food to tide me over or I eat more than I should at lunch."

Scientists also think breakfast eaters may be better able than breakfast skippers to resist fatty and high calorie foods throughout the day. Bonnie Chapman and Jani Bielenberg, both members of the NWCR and have lost more than 50 pounds and have kept it off for more than five years, agree with that theory. "Eating breakfast, specifically a cereal breakfast, keeps us full and helps stop our food cravings," Chapman said. "The cravings tended to be for pretty rich, high calorie foods."

Cereal benefits

A bowl of cereal, especially whole-grain cereals such as Cheerios, Wheaties, Total and Wheat Chex, in particular has surfaced as an influential part of a weight-reducing plan. Sixty percent of the NWCR members say they "always" or "usually" eat a bowl of cereal as part of their meal.

Data from the Nielsen's National Eating Trends Survey shows that women who are frequent cereal eaters (eating cereal more than seven times in a two-week period) weigh, on average, about nine pounds less than women who eat cereal less frequently or not at all. For men the difference was six pounds. Data from the survey also shows that those who do not eat cereal or eat cereal infrequently are more likely to be overweight or obese.

A study of weight trends in multiethnic women found cereal to be an indicator of successful weight control as well. Eating ready-to-eat cereal was inversely related to body mass index (BMI), a general measurement of what proportion of your body weight is fat. Women who ate cereal tended to have a lower BMI.

What to do

Based on the experience of many and the studies done to date, it appears that Moms are right (aren't we always!) and that Americans should heed the timeless advice to eat breakfast every day. Dr. Jim Hill, co-director of the NWCR and the registry's lead researcher has seen its value firsthand. "It's striking, not just that breakfast eating is a frequent behavior among our members, but that such a high proportion of them report eating it every day of the week."

A Great Start Toward Total Nutrition—An early breakfast may not be for everyone. Some people have a hard time eating right after they get up. The key is to eat by mid-morning before uncontrollable hunger takes over.

Quick, Portable Breakfasts

- Ready-to-eat, whole-grain cereal mixed with nuts and dried fruit
- Favorite low-fat yogurt topped with berries and whole-grain cereal
- Peanut butter-banana sandwich
- Shake (made from milk, yogurt and fruit)
- Wrap—tortilla, ham, cheese, shredded carrots and lettuce

