

Avoid common

# breakfast traps

## No time for breakfast?

Try these lightning fast or grab-and-go ideas

- Natural or toasted muesli topped with sliced banana or tinned fruit and milk
- A pot of flavoured yoghurt and some unsalted nuts and dried fruit
- Wholegrain crackers such as Vita Wheats with cheese and an apple

# breakfast

*We've all heard that to lose weight and keep it off, breakfast is essential. But what happens if you skip breakfast? Weight loss scientist Dr Amanda Sainsbury-Salis shows you how to avoid common breakfast traps that can sabotage your weight.*

Whenever I give seminars or workshops about weight management, someone always asks "I'm just not a breakfast person. Do I have to eat it?"

My answer is always the same: "You can do whatever you like, but if you're struggling to keep your weight under control, research shows that eating breakfast will make weight management much easier".

Breakfast is renowned for its ability to soothe morning crankiness and boost morning mental abilities. It delivers a shot of nutrients to your bloodstream, helping to prevent sudden cravings. These factors dramatically reduce your likelihood of snacking on high-kilojoule, nutrient-poor foods during the day, and therefore make it easier to manage your weight more effectively.

Indeed, in a study by Dr David Schlundt and colleagues at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, habitual breakfast skippers who lost weight on a program that included breakfast lost almost 2 kilos more than people on a program with the same number of kilojoules that did not include breakfast.

So if you're a habitual Breakfast Skipper, start eating breakfast regularly and you'll see that losing weight and keeping it off will be a whole lot easier.

### What time should I eat breakfast?

There's no concrete definition on the timing of breakfast, but a good guideline is to eat before you get into the swing of your day.

You may like to eat as soon as you wake up in the morning, or you may prefer to do a few things before eating, such as going for a walk, showering, dressing, and maybe even commuting.

Provided that you eat within an hour or so, before you start the main activities of your day, consider it breakfast.

### What if I'm not hungry for breakfast?

While you will have certainly heard how important it is to eat breakfast, many people have never heard another important concept: that to lose weight and keep it off, you need to make a habit of eating only when you feel physically hungry.

Scientific studies show that repeatedly eating when you aren't physically hungry puts you at risk of weight gain.

So, what to do if you don't feel hungry at breakfast time, even if you delay breakfast a bit? Of course, the best thing to do is to eat your breakfast anyway; otherwise you're likely to overeat later in the day.

However, if you repeatedly find that you're not physically hungry before you eat breakfast but you're trying to lose weight, you may start to wonder why your 'love handles' won't budge even though you're 'doing all the right things'.

To help keep your weight moving satisfyingly downwards, you need to train your body to get comfortably hungry in time for breakfast. That way you get the double-edged weight loss benefit of eating breakfast AND of eating only when hungry.

When you wake up hungry for breakfast, it usually means that your body has used up the food you gave it in the hours before you went to sleep and is now burning off stored fat in order to generate the energy it needs.

#### Why am I so ravenous the morning after a big meal?

Have you ever been surprised to wake up ravenously hungry the morning after a big feast?

Excess food (particularly processed carbohydrates) stimulates a large increase in the amount of insulin in your circulation. This flood of insulin pushes food-derived fuels such as glucose out of your blood stream and into your muscle, liver and fat. Here, some of it is immediately used for energy, but most of the excess is stored as glycogen or fat. The result is that your blood glucose levels can plummet and your hunger can soar even though you've overeaten.

To ensure that your morning hunger is a sign that you're burning and not storing fat, be sure to eat foods that are as minimally processed as possible (e.g. brown rice instead of white bread) with plenty of fruits and/or vegetables, eat only when you feel comfortably and physically hungry, and stop eating when you feel pleasantly satisfied.

### How do I boost my appetite for breakfast?

When you wake up in the morning, take a moment to rate how hungry you feel.

If you usually wake up to a hearty appetite, or you work up a hearty appetite within the hour or so before you eat breakfast, that's great!

If, on the other hand, you usually eat breakfast but you're not actually hungry for it, try eating a little less in the afternoons and evenings until you start consistently waking up with a hearty appetite for breakfast.

The idea is to eat just enough to satisfy your physical needs and then simply get on with living your life to the full.

When you do this, within a short space of time you'll start waking up to a hearty appetite for breakfast, and losing weight and keeping it off will be much easier.

## Ask Dr Amanda



Discover practical weight management solutions from Australia's leading weight loss scientist Dr Amanda Sainsbury-Salis

## Why do I have middle aged spread?

I am 61, quite fit and weigh 54 kilos. I have worked hard to keep myself in shape and have stayed this weight for most of my life but in the last year everything seems to have gone to my tummy. How can I weigh the same but get bigger round my middle?? It's very annoying. I walk, do a hydrotherapy class as well as Tai Chi, I am active in the community and always on the go at home. Frustrated! NSW

Dear Frustrated, what you've noticed is the famous 'middle aged spread', which kicks in around menopause for many women and is related to effects of lack of oestrogen. If your waist is greater than 80 cm in diameter and you have any risk factors for metabolic diseases such as hypertension or elevated blood lipids, talk with your doctor about whether or not you should lose weight. Weight loss will reduce your overall body fatness, including some belly fat, but it will also reduce your muscle mass and increase your risk of nutritional deficiencies. This is something you want to avoid at all costs in your 60s and beyond, because having a good muscle mass and optimized nutrition will help you to live independently for decades to come. ♥

Dr Amanda Sainsbury-Salis graduated from UWA (BSC Hons) and has a PhD from the University of Geneva. She leads a research team in Sydney investigating how the brain controls body weight. Dr Sainsbury-Salis authored *The Don't Go Hungry Diet* ([www.DrAmandaOnline.com](http://www.DrAmandaOnline.com)) and has personally lost 28 kilos and has kept it off for over ten years.