

The Benefits of Breakfast

Kellogg's Factsheet



The familiar saying '**breakfast is the most important meal of the day**' is overwhelmingly supported by research findings. However, despite knowledge of its benefits, skipping breakfast is becoming common practice in the Arab Gulf - for example it has been reported that 44% of students in the UAE¹ and 50% of students in Oman² are regularly missing this essential meal.

The case for eating breakfast is clear: it provides vital nutrition; it makes us more alert; helps keep us fit and healthy; and improves performance and behaviours at school and work. Missing breakfast regularly has a negative impact on both physical and mental wellbeing.

Fascinating Breakfast Facts

- The English word 'breakfast' has been traced back to the mid-15th century. Breakfast literally means 'breaking the fast' as for many people it comes around 8-14 hours since their last meal.
- Ready-to-eat breakfast cereals were created by Dr John Harvey Kellogg, who produced the first simple corn flake back in 1895.
- Each single serving of most Kellogg's cereals with milk contains five key nutrients, which are important for the entire family's dietary needs of: calcium, protein, vitamin D, B-vitamins and iron.

Breakfast - A Social Meal

Family mealtimes have traditionally been a core part of life across the Arab Gulf, but a rapid shift towards a more westernised eating pattern means that they are increasingly changing. Shared mealtimes are far more than just a time together socially; researchers across Europe and the US have shown that family mealtimes have a significant impact on family communication and functioning, the development of healthy eating patterns in children and improving literacy rates and school performance³. Conversations and discussions over a shared meal help to develop children's confidence and communication skills for the future⁴.

Breakfast - Feeding Body and Mind

Breakfast boosts mental and physical performance in both adults and children, with teachers commonly observing that hungry children cannot learn effectively. Research upholds this observation⁵. Those who eat breakfast have been shown to select critical information more efficiently during problem-solving tasks⁶; perform better in both mathematical and creative tasks⁷; and demonstrate improved accuracy on a range of cognitive function tests⁸.

Adults also benefit mentally from eating breakfast. In a series of memory and recall tests, those who had eaten breakfast performed significantly better at memory tasks compared to those who had not eaten a breakfast meal. Recollection speed also improved^{9,10}.

Recommending a healthy breakfast every day of the week should be a key part in all dietary advice.

Breakfast Eaters are Healthier

Extensive research across the globe confirms that regular breakfast eaters (both adults and children) are healthier than those who skip breakfast^{11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18}.

BREAKFAST CEREAL EATERS TEND TO HAVE:

- Higher intake of carbohydrates and lower intake of fat
- Higher intakes of vitamins and minerals
- Lower body mass index & lower risk of obesity
- Lower blood cholesterol levels
- Higher fibre intakes

Recent studies suggest that regular breakfast eaters are less likely to develop heart disease and diabetes. Men who usually skip breakfast have been found to be 27% more likely to develop coronary heart disease, 15% more likely to experience substantial weight gain and 21% more likely to develop type 2 diabetes compared to men who regularly eat breakfast¹⁹.

This may be due to altered metabolic effects such as increased blood fats and impaired insulin sensitivity. Similar results have also been reported for women²⁰ and young adults²¹.

Nutritional Contribution of Breakfast Cereals

When consumed regularly fortified breakfast cereals can make a valuable contribution to dietary intakes. For example, in the UK, where breakfast cereals are often consumed daily, these provide around 20% of a child's average intake of folic acid, iron and vitamin D, whilst contributing on average just 2% of fat, 7% sugar and 4% of salt intakes¹¹. The Food Dome, the dietary guidelines for Arab countries, recommends increased consumption of fortified cereal products²². The whole Kellogg's range of breakfast cereals is fortified with riboflavin, iron, thiamin and folic acid, and many now also contain Vitamin D.

Table 1 shows that breakfast cereals with milk are able to help keep fat, salt and sugar intakes low, while providing significant amounts of vitamins, minerals and fibre.

Kellogg's breakfast cereals are fortified with a range of B-group vitamins and iron. All of Kellogg's children's cereals are now fortified with vitamin D which is found to be commonly deficient across the Arab Gulf^{23,24,25}.

TABLE 1: CONTRIBUTION OF SOME BREAKFAST FOODS TO RECOMMENDED INTAKE.

| NUTRIENT | RECOMMENDED POPULATION REQUIREMENT | 30g CORN FLAKES (with 125ml semi skimmed milk) | 30g BRAN FLAKES (with 125ml semi skimmed milk) | BALALEET (fried sweetened vermicelli) | BAITH TOMAAT (traditional eggs with tomatoes) |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| Energy (kcal)* | 2000 | 171 | 166 | 677 | 234 |
| Total fat (g)* | 70 | 2.4 | 3.0 | 19.7 | 16.8 |
| Saturated fat (g)* | 20 | 1.4 | 1.5 | 8.3 | 4.8 |
| Sugars (g)* | 90 | 8.3 | 13 | 61.7 | 3.4 |
| Fibre (g) | 25 | 0.9 | 4.5 | 0.2 | 0.8 |
| Salt (g)* | 6.0 | 0.34 | 0.3 | 0.46 | 3.1 |
| Iron (mg)* | 14 | 2.4 | 3.5 | 6.9 | 3.7 |
| Riboflavin (mg)* | 1.4 | 0.38 | 0.7 | 0.25 | 0.4 |
| Folate (µg)* | 200 | 58 | 108 | 34 | 70 |
| Vitamin D (µg)* | 5 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 1.36 | 2.4 |

*Based on EU Reference Intake (RI) for an average adult.

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