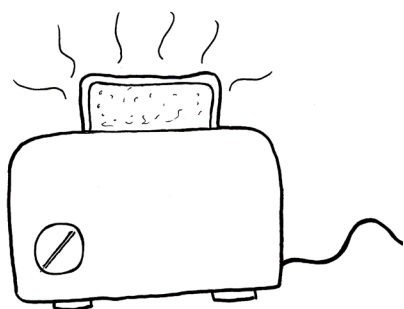


# BRILLIANT BREAKFASTS



## WHY IS BREAKFAST SO IMPORTANT?

Quite simply, breakfast does exactly what it says on the tin: it *breaks* a fast. First thing in the morning you've been without food for several hours so your body is in need of a good balanced meal to restore your energy levels and kick-start the day.



It can be really tempting to sleep in and save time by skipping breakfast, or to simply grab a quick snack on the way to school. These are bad habits to get into as they'll affect your energy levels for the rest of the day. Eating foods high in fat and sugar for breakfast will give you an instant energy high, followed by a quick energy drop, leaving you feeling sluggish, tired and craving sugary, fatty snacks well before lunchtime. Skipping breakfast completely means that by mid-morning you'll be reaching for high-fat, sugary snacks to give you that instant energy kick. Over time, all of these can result in weight gain and obesity. By having breakfast, you'll be able to concentrate better and get through the morning without feeling hungry.

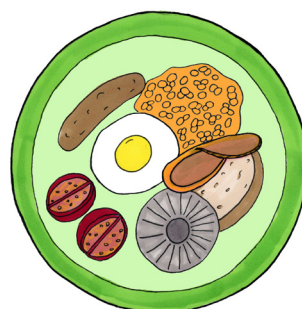
An ideal breakfast is balanced and packed with a combination of carbohydrates, protein and wholegrain foods. This means you should only need a piece of fresh fruit or a few nuts or seeds at break time to keep you satisfied until lunch. It's also a great opportunity to start you off on reaching your 5 a day (see *Getting your 5 a day*).

You don't have to stick to a bowl of cereal or a slice of toast every day. In fact, you'll get more of the vitamins and minerals you need by mixing it up a bit and eating something different on each day of the week – see below for some delicious ideas.

Be creative about what you eat and bear in mind all the things to look out for in a balanced meal. Take this example: which of the below do you think is better?

**Shop-bought blueberry muffin** vs

**Full monty-style English breakfast**



Surprisingly, both options have similar levels of calories and fat but the cooked breakfast is a complete balanced meal, making it the better choice. It contains lots of protein thanks to the eggs, and carbohydrate and fibre from the toast and beans. The bacon and sausage make this breakfast slightly high in fat, so you shouldn't be eating a full monty breakfast every day of the week, but it gives you a good example of what you get from different foods.

*The NHS have a great website to help you plan out balanced meals for a week – check out: <http://www.nhs.uk/Tools/Pages/5aday.aspx?Tag=> It has lots of great recipe suggestions, tells you how many of your 5 a day you're getting, and will even create a shopping list for you!*

## **HOW TO GET STARTED**

If you really struggle for time or aren't used to eating a meal first thing in the morning, then start small. Try having a glass of 100% unsweetened fruit juice or a piece of fruit each morning to get you into the habit of eating, then start introducing more substantial breakfasts to your routine once or twice a week. A good option is to make a batch of home-made granola or flapjacks packed with seeds and nuts at the weekend. You can have bite-sized bars to start with and it will save you time during the week because they can also be eaten on the move if you need to take your breakfast with you for the journey to school.

## **SOME BREAKFAST IDEAS TO GET YOU INSPIRED**

Fresh fruit platter and yoghurt; full monty-style English breakfast; granola, fruit and yoghurt; home-made blueberry pancakes; eggy crumpets; baked beans on toast; savoury muffin; smoked salmon and scrambled egg on toast; porridge with different toppings (see *Porridge and toppings*); muesli with nuts, seeds, fruit and yoghurt; fresh fruit smoothies.