

Michael van Straten's Healthy and Essential Fact Sheet with Classic Gold Radio

BREAKFAST LIKE A KING, LUNCH LIKE A PRINCE, DINE LIKE A PAUPER

This ancient proverb has more than a grain of truth in it, but sadly, most people leading today's busy lives skip breakfast altogether. This is really bad news as ideally you should be getting 25 percent of your day's calories from breakfast, enough to keep you going right through till lunchtime, both physically and mentally. Starting the day without refuelling your body's engine means poor concentration, irritability, low blood sugar and a dreadful craving for the biscuit tin or chocolate bar in the middle of the morning.

Five million people don't bother to eat breakfast at home but grab a snack while dashing to work. They consume one and a half million bacon sandwiches, over a million packets of crisps, and three-quarters of a million ham sandwiches and more than a million sugary soft drinks. But worse still, half the working population skip breakfast altogether and another half a million grab a bag of sweets or bar of chocolate on their way.

Breakfast is exactly what it says, breaking your fast, and for most people the time they spend in bed is the longest period they go without food. When you get up in the morning it may easily be 8 – 12 hours since you last ate and your blood sugar level is at rock bottom. In order for your brain to function properly it needs a constant supply of sugar which is why starting your day with breakfast is so important. Skipping breakfast means poorer performance by schoolchildren, a greater risk of accidents when driving, and a lack of efficiency and concentration at work.

And just to prove the point, a study published last year showed that people who ate breakfast were definitely happier than those who didn't. What's more, the American Institute for Cancer Research say it's time for a radical look at the morning meal. Breakfast should be seen as one of the three basic meals that not only supplies energy but the vitamins, minerals and natural plant chemicals that reduce the risks of cancer, strokes and heart disease. According to the American Institute for Cancer Research, switching to a better breakfast will not only reduce your risk of developing cancer but can also lower your chances of falling victim to strokes, heart disease, obesity and diabetes. At a time when one in five children is seriously overweight and adult onset diabetes is happening to kids as young as seven, now is the time to make sure your youngsters start the day with a meal that could change their lives for ever.

Breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and dine like a pauper may be an age old proverb, but is accurate. Making breakfast a major contributor to health, well-being and a significant reduction in the risk of all types of cancer is simple. Ditch the Danish pastry, junk the jam doughnuts, and forget the fry up. Fruit smoothies and milkshakes, fresh fruits and juices, good cereals like wholemeal toast, porridge, muesli and Shredded Wheat, poached or boiled eggs, tomatoes, mushrooms, and even the old standby of baked beans can turn breakfast into a health-giving banquet.

Very few of my patients ever admit to having the great British fry-up breakfast, in fact hardly anybody admits to it, so why do so many cafes all over the country and in all our

favourite British sunshine holiday hotspots have signs outside saying 'English breakfast served all day'. Even the residents of Albert Square are in and out of the café for their fry-up in every episode! Of course, almost everyone loves it, but feels too guilty to admit it.

As well as good food you can give your body a real health boost by adding the amazing nutrients from flax seeds. One of Nature's ancient nutritional gifts, flax seeds were, until recently, only eaten regularly by the real health food enthusiasts. Now you'll find flax seed products in good supermarkets and health stores throughout the country and the best of all come from the American organic company, Barleans. Barleans Flax Oil is rich in the Omega-3, 6 and 9 essential fatty acids which are important for natural immunity, a healthy heart and arteries and to control cholesterol levels. The High Lignan Oil is rich in special fibre which is known to make a vital contribution to health by reducing cholesterol levels. Barleans Essential Woman is a combination of organic Flax Seed Oil, evening primrose oil, tiny particles of flax seed and soy isoflavones. This is especially helpful for women with PMS and those going through the process of the menopause.

The best breakfasts always include a glass of fruit or vegetable juice to which a tablespoon of one of the Barleans oils should be added. You can also stir them into your yoghurt or use them in salad dressings. When it comes to porridge, muesli or fruits, sprinkle on two heaped tablespoons of Barleans Organic Fortiflax for a natural source of extra fibre, minerals, fatty acids and lignans. Fortiflax can also be sprinkled on to your yoghurt and mixed with juice or smoothies.

Here's how to do the healthy version of the traditional English, and believe me, it tastes just as good. Start with the mushrooms, tomatoes and egg. Bring a pan half full of water to the boil, turn it down to a simmer, put in one large tomato and 2 oz mushrooms, whole if small and sliced if large. Put a large plate on top of the simmering saucepan. When the plate is really hot break an egg on to it and let it cook – a great trick taught to me by Anton Mosimann. By the time the egg's ready you can strain the mushrooms and tomato straight on to the hot plate.

If you're seriously interested in healthy cooking you'll have a good quality heavy griddle pan, if not now's the time to get one. These are like a large frying pan with raised ridges on the bottom and I find the rectangular ones a much more convenient shape. You need no fat at all and any fat in whatever you're cooking runs off into the hollows between the ridges.

While your water is coming to the boil heat the griddle pan and put in the sausage. When it's brown all over, add the rasher of bacon with excess fat removed, and the black pudding. If you really must have fried bread rather than toast, put 18 oz of water and 2 oz of rapeseed oil (the healthiest oil to cook in and available in supermarkets) into an indoor plant sprayer. Shake vigorously then spray very sparingly onto a small frying pan to cook the fried bread. If you've timed it right everything else will be ready by the time the egg is cooked, remove the plate from the saucepan, wipe the underneath with a tea cloth, strain the mushrooms and tomatoes and add the sausage, bacon, black pudding and fried bread. It might take a little longer but you're saving almost 500 calories and 50 grams of fat. That's about a quarter of the average daily calorie requirement for women and approaching a total day's fat consumption. And you can still enjoy the great British breakfast.

Protein in the morning is real energy and brain activity food whereas a mainly starch based breakfast keeps you calm, serene and happy. So what you eat depends on your needs for that particular morning. If you need to be alert, mentally active and sharp, then kick start your day with a real indulgence of scrambled eggs and smoked salmon. Scramble two organic free range eggs – they’ll be a wonderful colour and richer in nutrients - in a little butter but no milk. Once they start setting simply add two dessertspoons of chopped oak smoked salmon. You can often buy leftover bits from a whole side at less than half price if you go to a delicatessen or packs of trimmings in the supermarket. Although smoked salmon does contain some salt, the combination of protein and essential fatty acids is real high power brainfood. Serve with lots of black pepper and crunchy wholemeal toast for 330 calories and 25 g fat, some of which is the healthiest variety. Kick off with a glass of orange juice or a fresh kiwi for a day’s dose of vitamin C and you’ll be fit for anything.

All of the complex carbohydrates encourage the production of calming chemicals in the brain. So if you’re facing a stressful morning or you just want to feel at peace with the world and happy, then oats are your best bet. A large bowl of freshly made porridge using half water and half semi-skimmed milk, topped off with cinnamon, a relaxing spice, some honey and a dessertspoonful of cream as a luxury treat, will give you a whole morning of slow release energy, lots of B vitamins, healthy calories, and very little fat. Of course not forgetting to add a tablespoon of Forti Flax.

Alternatively why not try muesli the traditional Swiss way. Start with one of the organic sugar free products like Jordans, before you go to bed the night before add orange or apple juice and a small carton of low fat live yogurt to a bowl of muesli and leave it covered in the fridge. In the morning add fresh fruit, especially blueberries or blackberries, a sliced banana and a little honey, and you really will have a breakfast fit for a king. Like the porridge, masses of slow release energy, bags of vitamin C and a huge helping of the cancer and heart protective chemicals from the berries. You’ll be at peace with the world.

Being half a Dutchman I have to declare a special interest in this one. Two slices of wholemeal toast with a scraping of butter, each covered with thinly pre-sliced low fat Dutch Gouda cheese. Cover with thin slices of fresh tomato and have with a glass of fresh orange juice.

Here’s how the breakfasts stack up nutritionally:

Percentage of daily requirement for an averagely active woman

	Cals	Protein	Fat	Vitamin C	Fibre	Comments
Muesli with fresh fruit	125 7%	8.5 g 18%	2 g	110 mg 275%	4.8 g 27%	20% of iron and 25% of calcium needs
English – healthy version	290 15%	16.5 g 37%	19 g	30 mg 75%	4.5 g 25%	27% of vitamin A and 13% iron
Scrambled eggs with smoked salmon	330 17%	23 g 51%	25 g	Nil	4.5 g 25%	Some healthy fat from the salmon and 50% of vitamin A
Dutch delight	300 16%	18 g 40%	25 g	92 mg 226%	4.2 g 23%	34.5% of calcium, 35% of vitamin A

Dutch delight takes moments to prepare, is the cheapest and ideal for everyone who says they haven’t got time for breakfast. The muesli also takes a few moments,

especially if you've pre-soaked it the night before – and the cooked breakfasts naturally take a bit longer.

With everybody leading such crazy lives why not get up a little earlier and make this the one meal of the day which the family eats together. Tomorrow, make sure you breakfast like a king and don't forget your flax seeds.

To order your organic Forti Flax and other fine organic Barleans Oils, please call 08700 53 6000 or visit www.healthyandessential.com