

EATING WELL IN THE MORNING

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Skipping breakfast is a no-brainer – literally. Skip breakfast, and your brain and body suffer all day. Eat well in the morning, and get on the nutrition fast track for a healthy day. Breakfast is easy and (essential) ANYWHERE – home, school, work, or drive-thru.

WHY eat in the morning?

- **RE-FUEL** your body after a long overnight fast.
- **REV-UP** your metabolism for healthy weight.
- **KICK-START** your brain for school and work.
- **IMPROVE** your mood!

WHAT foods make a power breakfast?

- **Carbohydrate:** A high-energy carbohydrate energizes your body and brain for a busy day. Think cereal (hot or cold), bread, muffins, roll, tortillas, or rice. Choose whole grains for an extra nutrition punch for more fiber.
- **Protein:** This is the missing link in most morning meals. Protein is what you need to go strong until lunch. Think lean – a slice or two of Canadian bacon, an egg and a slice of deli meat or cheese, a container of yogurt or a scoop of cottage cheese.
- **Fruit:** Breakfast is a great way to start on the five-to-nine daily servings of produce your body need for optimal health. Think fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruit (and veggies) – like pears, apples, mangos, berries, bananas, oranges, grapefruit, kiwi, or pineapple.



ARE BREAKFAST BARS THE ANSWER?

Maybe – but you have to be a smart shopper!

Energy bars are everywhere these days – magazine ads, supermarket shelves, pharmacy displays, health food stores, and convenience store counter. The packages are filled with promises to boost energy levels, replace entire meals, promote weight loss, and to bolster intake of protein, vitamins, and minerals.

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Before you bite into an energy bar for breakfast (or any other meal), you may want to think twice and do some careful label reading too! Here are a few things to check:

Calorie, fat, and sugar?

There's no magic 'pep' in these bars. The energy is from calories, just like other foods. Some energy bars are more like "souped up" candy bars with plenty of fat, saturated fat, and sugar. Check the calories – some have as many as 300. That's quite a snack!

Protein?

If you are using bars as a meal replacement, choose a product with at least 10-15 grams of protein. Most bars use whey, casein (both from milk), or soy as their protein source.

Fiber?

Look for bars with three or more grams of fiber per serving. Also, remember to drink plenty of water with these bars, since they are very dense and can slow down your GI track.

Taste?

Many products have failed taste tests (or bar exams?) by various groups. If you're not satisfied with the taste of any food, you are likely to "make up" by eating more later.

Alternatives?

An energy bar is certainly not the only way to enjoy a quick, portable breakfast or snack. There are many delicious ways to boost your

energy level and get more nutrients, like:

- Low-fat yogurt topped with crunchy cereal and sliced fruit.
- String cheese with whole grain crackers and a bag of baby carrots.
- Trail mix made with cereal, nuts, dried fruit, and a few chocolate chips.

Information adapted from Eat Right Montana, a coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles.



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