

# Eat breakfast, lower your cholesterol

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Eat breakfast, lower your cholesterol

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You've heard it from Mom. You've heard it from your doctor. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. A recent study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition gives evidence that maybe they're right.

In this study, ten young, healthy women were divided into two groups. One group ate breakfast between 7:00 and 8:00 am and the other did not eat until 12:00 - 1:00 pm. Both groups had a chocolate-covered cookie between 10:30-11:00am. For breakfast, the women ate whole grain cereal with 2% milk. They had their normal lunch and dinner with two additional snacks for the rest of the day. The women ate this way for 2 weeks, had a 2-week break, and then switched groups.

Researchers found that skipping breakfast was associated with higher total and LDL (bad) cholesterol than those who ate breakfast. Although the women's weight did not change much, those who omitted breakfast consumed more calories throughout the day. Overtime, it is likely that those increased calories would lead to weight gain. Those who did not eat breakfast had higher insulin levels and were less sensitive to the effects of insulin. When the pancreas gives off insulin after a person eats, the insulin helps to bring the glucose (sugar) from the meal into the cells where it is either stored or used as energy. High levels of insulin and decreased insulin sensitivity can mean that the body is becoming "resistant" to insulin and cannot use it properly.

This study is interesting because it shows just how important breakfast is. Although this isn't a "diabetes study," there are plenty of lessons to learn. We know that diabetes and high cholesterol go hand-in-hand. Diabetes is definitely related to insulin resistance and also to weight gain. Each of these conditions is a risk factor for heart attack and stroke. In this study, those who skipped breakfast had worse cholesterol, insulin resistance, and ate extra calories that could lead to weight gain. And the study was

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only for 2 weeks! Eating breakfast daily may be a great way to help control your cholesterol, glucose levels, and waistline without taking another medication. The risk of heart attack and stroke may be lowered in the process!

So maybe Mom and the doctor were right. Although more research needs to be done and longer studies conducted, this study should motivate people with and without diabetes to eat breakfast. In this study, the women had bran flakes with 2% milk. You could try a different whole grain or fiber cereal— oatmeal, Cheerios, or Fiber One for example. Try 2% milk, or even skim milk. Remember that cholesterol and heart disease are big threats to people with and without diabetes. Another study suggests that eating breakfast lowers your fat intake for the day— also helping to reduce your risk. Cereal is cheap, quick, and easy to make. Tomorrow morning, make a date with your bowl and spoon.

### References:

1. Hamid R, Farshchi HR, Taylor MA, Macdonald IA. Deleterious effects of omitting breakfast on insulin sensitivity and fasting lipid profiles in healthy lean women. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. 2005;81:388–396.

<http://www.riteaiddiabetes.com/newsletter/article6.html#cholesterol>

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"In a world where more than 10 million americans live with cancer -- we believe unity is strength, knowledge is power, and attitude is everything!"

-- Livestrong, by Lance Armstrong

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