Quick & Healthy Breakfast Ideas

**IMPORTANCE OF BREAKFAST**
Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. However, it is often one of the most skipped meals. Eating breakfast is vital because after 8–12 hours without food, the brain and muscles need "energy" to function. We get energy from the glucose contained in foods, along with important nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, fiber, and protein.

**WHAT TO WATCH FOR**
For breakfast, the best choice is a combination of whole grains, dairy, fruits or vegetables, and a healthy fat source. The carbohydrates (found in whole grains, dairy and fruit) will help to maintain appropriate blood sugar levels and provide energy for your day. Whole grains will also provide heart healthy fiber, which also helps to keep your digestive tract regulated. The fat may sound odd, but a small amount at breakfast will actually help to keep you feeling full longer.

**WHOLE GRAINS**
Whole grain dry cereal, cream of wheat, oatmeal, granola bars, English muffins, bagels, tortillas, crackers, quinoa.

**FRUIT**
Apples, oranges, peaches, bananas, grapes, blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, pears, blackberries, plums, watermelon, pineapple, kiwi, mango, papaya, grapefruit, dried fruit.

**DAIRY**
Low-fat yogurt, milk, cottage cheese, and sliced, shredded, or string cheese.
Soy milk and nut milks are also an alternative.

**FAT**
Hard-boiled eggs, egg whites, peanut and nut butter, hummus, nuts, low-fat cream cheese, and margarine.
*Dairy products will also contain fat, so make low-fat choices.*

**EXAMPLES OF COMBINATIONS**
- Oatmeal w/ craisins, blueberries, almonds, brown sugar, and skim milk.
- Granola bar, strawberry low-fat yogurt and an banana.
- Bagel w/ low-fat cream cheese and a pear.
- Cinnamon raisin bagel w/ peanut butter and skim milk.
- Whole wheat English muffin w/ Nutella, an orange, and skim milk.
- Whole grain cereal (Special K, Kashi, Total Raisin Bran, etc) w/ skim milk and a banana.
- Low-fat yogurt w/ berries and granola topping, w/ 1 slice whole wheat toast and skim milk.
- Whole wheat bread w/ peanut butter, sliced banana, raisins on top and cinnamon w/ skim milk.
- Low-fat cottage cheese w/ sliced peaches and a whole wheat English muffin w/ fruit spread.
- Whole grain English muffin w/ melted low-fat cheese, tomato, & hard-boiled egg, w/ 100% juice.
- Cream of wheat topped with raisins and sliced bananas, and skim milk.
- Trail mix: whole grain cereal, nuts (almonds or walnuts), dried fruit, dark chocolate, etc.
- Whole grain crackers, reduced-fat cheddar cheese, a handful of almonds, and grapes.
- Pita pocket filled w/ peanut butter, sliced apples, peaches, and banana w/ skim milk.
- 1 or 2 hard boiled eggs, low-fat string cheese and 100% juice.
- Quinoa topped w/ blueberries, honey and almonds, paired w/ skim milk.

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