

Breakfast on the go

It's important to fuel up to start the day. Breakfast helps improve brain function, blood sugar levels, fatigue and the urge to overeat later, says [Jill Heitzig, APRN](#), a family nurse practitioner with OSF HealthCare.

But sometimes life gets in the way. How can you work a healthy breakfast into a busy lifestyle?

- Meal prep on the weekends. Heitzig says egg bites with vegetables are an option that will stay fresh in the refrigerator for a few days. Overnight oats topped with dried fruit or nuts are another good choice. Two cups of fruits and three cups of vegetables are good goals, Heitzig says.

"Keep things simple with a protein shake. If you're having a busy day, a protein shake is a quick option to get some calories and protein to make your morning go a little bit better," Heitzig says.

- Choose healthier versions of breakfast staples. For example, pass on the syrup that has added sugar.
- What about those sugary mainstays like cereal? Heitzig admits they're tough to resist, especially for kids, in part because they're advertised so much.

"Once in a while, it's totally fine," Heitzig says. "But I highly recommend adding a protein, like a breakfast meat. Or, add a fruit. This helps stabilize those blood sugar levels so we don't have those spikes and dips over time."

- When can parents trust kids to have a healthy breakfast on their own? There's no set age, Heitzig says. Every child is different. But, make it a conversation and set expectations early.

"Encourage those better decisions. Push them to make better choices," Heitzig says. "Give them more options. Kids love to choose. Maybe they'll keep leaning toward those [healthy] options rather than reaching for those sugary cereals and Pop Tarts."

"Also, let them be involved," Heitzig adds. "Let them make their own yogurt parfait or eggs. I know mornings can be busy, and it's not always possible. But letting them be involved when you're there leads to better decisions on their own later in life."

- For adults on the go, research healthier options.

"Drive thru breakfast shouldn't be a daily thing," Heitzig cautions. But, you can make better choices. Skip the deep-fried morning dish in favor of something with egg whites or Canadian bacon.

Learn more

The [OSF HealthCare website](#) has healthy recipes.