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Mission Possible - A Healthy Breakfast in a Hurry

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Recently, the media reported on a popular US fast food chain's newest gut-busting breakfast burrito. Containing nearly 1,000 calories and 60 grams of fat, the chain's breakfast disaster takes up half of the calories most people need in an entire day, plus all of the fat. The report highlighted only one choice in the growing field of breakfast blunders - it seems a quick breakfast that you can hold in your hand is quickly getting out of hand.



Beware of Breakfast Blowouts

We bet you wouldn't consider a six-piece chicken McNugget order and small fries for breakfast. But if you eat a typical bakery-style bagel smeared with 2 oz of cream cheese, you'll take in the same amount of calories and almost as much fat.

Surprised? How about this shocker: You might not think twice about enjoying a coffee shop muffin with a steaming cafe mocha, but maybe you should. You'd take in just as many calories and nearly as much fat with that mocha and muffin as you would eating an entire supreme personal pan pizza. While a few healthy fast food breakfast choices do exist, you undoubtedly have better control over the calories, fat, and sodium if you pack your own at home before you go.

Healthy Breakfast in the Fast Lane

For fast living folks, the key to creating a quick breakfast is keeping a few key ingredients on hand. The best breakfasts contain a whole grain or fruit/vegetable-based carbohydrate to provide a quick burst of energy to your body after "fasting" overnight, plus a low-fat protein source to help make you feel full longer. Some carbohydrates, like milk products, do double duty and provide the protein too.

For a winning combination, add an item from the "Sustainable" column to an item or two from the "Energy" column to create "sustainable energy" that will keep you moving all morning long.

Sustainable

- 1 Tablespoon of peanut butter
- 1 Egg, any style
- Handful of nuts (almonds, peanuts, walnuts)
- Low-fat cottage cheese
- Fat-free skim milk
- Low fat yogurt
- Canadian bacon
- Lean ham or turkey
- Silken tofu
- Meatless breakfast patties or links

Energy

- Frozen whole grain waffle
- Whole grain mini bagel
- Whole wheat tortilla
- Low-sugar whole grain cereal (aim for < 5 grams sugar/serving)
- Dried fruit
- Fresh fruit
- Oatmeal
- Whole wheat toast
- Whole wheat pita half
- 100% fruit juice

The Bottom Line

You don't have to invest a lot of time or half a day's calories to start your day with a great meal. With a few key ingredients on hand, you can create a fast and healthy breakfast that will fuel your busy life.

If you're not up to morning mixing, we've created a few examples of healthy breakfast choices using the listed suggestions. With so many possibilities, don't stop here!

- Trail mix of nuts, dried fruit, and a whole grain cereal
- Whole wheat tortilla with a scrambled egg (add a dollop of salsa to spice it up)
- Smoothie made from silken tofu, skim milk, and berries
- Low-fat yogurt mixed with a chopped apple and whole grain cereal

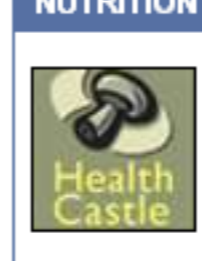
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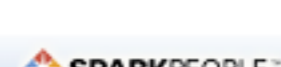
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