

## Health for the Whole Family

October, 2009

### THE BENEFITS OF EATING BREAKFAST AT DINNER

After a day of meetings at the office, followed by a three car pile-up adding an unexpected 30 minutes to the commute home, the last thing you want to do is get home and spend another 45 minutes in the kitchen fixing dinner. Before calling the pizza delivery guy for a rescue, consider that a quick, inexpensive, and nutritious dinner could be just an egg carton away.

Having a light breakfast for dinner instead of the traditional dinnertime fare, such as pasta, meat and potatoes, and casserole, is beneficial for a number of reasons. The ingredients in breakfast foods are often less expensive, quicker to prepare, and, most importantly, lower in calories.

Many of you skip breakfast, are starving by lunchtime, and then wait six or seven hours before eating dinner, when you overeat. Consuming so much of your daily calories just before you lie down for bed is bad for digestion. The better option is to keep yourself satisfied throughout the day by eating healthy snacks between meals. By dinnertime, all a person will require is something light. Breakfast foods like oatmeal, fruit smoothies, and omelets are great options.

Omelets are quick and easy dinnertime meals that enable people to get in all the nutrients they need at once, rather than preparing three separate components of a dinner. It is suggested sautéing some vegetables, like mushrooms, spinach, and broccoli and adding the chopped vegetables to a mixture of one egg white with one egg with yolk (a lower cholesterol alternative to using two eggs with yolk) and low-fat cheese. Top with some salsa and avocado. Instead of potatoes, serve fruit, or if you want the potatoes, only dish out half a serving. And, finally, a small glass of juice (4-6 oz) helps add in any fruit servings missed earlier in the day.

Another fast breakfast for dinner option is making a smoothie. A suggestion for a healthy smoothie is combine half a banana with one-fourth cup of blueberries, a scoop of protein mix, milk, and some peach slices.

Most of the energy you need from food is used during the course of the day. If you're constantly refueling yourself throughout the day, you won't feel so depleted when evening comes, where so many tend to overeat and then lie around. It is recommended you have low calorie, mid-meal snacks in the morning and afternoon, like almonds, to help you stave off hunger.

In the end, it doesn't really matter whether you are eating breakfast foods or dinner foods at night, as long as you're watching your portion sizes and the nutritional content is balanced.

Preventive medicine is just one aspect of care osteopathic physicians (D.O.s) provide. D.O.s are fully-licensed to prescribe medicine and practice in all specialty areas including surgery. D.O.s are trained to consider the health of the whole person and use their hands to help diagnose and treat their patients.

**\*The contributing physician to this article was Natalie A. Nevins, DO, an AOA board-certified family physician and director of medical education for the Downey Regional Medical Center in Downey, Calif.**