

Feeling Good

THE ENZYME THAT TURNS BACK TIME

6 FOODS TO BOOST YOUR BRAINPOWER

Got Cake?

If you're trying to lose weight, breakfast may not be complete without dessert: Intriguing new research suggests dieting is more about when to indulge than what to avoid.

By Gina Roberts-Grey



T SOUNDS

too delicious to be true, but according to Israeli researchers, finishing off a protein-rich breakfast with something sweet—like a doughnut, a slice of cake, even chocolate mousse—might be the ever-elusive secret to shedding pounds and keeping them off.

In the study, two groups of overweight and obese people were instructed to consume the same number of calories daily (1,400 for women, 1,600 for men); the difference was that one group ate a modest breakfast each morning, while the other went all out with a high-calorie (600), high-carb (60 grams), high-protein (45 grams) meal that included a sugary treat. (Imagine a scramble

weight they'd lost. Why? They'd started to cheat—which makes sense given that they reported feeling hungrier and had higher levels of the appetite hormone ghrelin.

When it comes to maintaining weight loss, "curbing your cravings is more important than deprivation," explains lead author Daniela Jakubowicz, MD, who adds that morning is an ideal time to satisfy your body's nutritional demands as well as your sweet tooth. Previous research suggests that an energizing dose of protein at breakfast leads to a greater sense of satiety than protein consumed at either lunch or dinner. And topping off the A.M. meal with dessert might provide a rush of serotonin (the "happy" chemical) that diminishes cravings for the rest of the day. Plus, your levels of adrenaline and cortisol are at their peak early in the day: "These hormones help convert food into energy rather than fat," says Jakubowicz, "so the same food is less fattening in the morning than in the afternoon."

Hannah El-Amin, a dietitian and diabetes educator at Chicago's Northwestern Integrative Medicine, believes this strategy could work for any woman, whether she's looking to lose ten pounds or 100. "Dieters assume that the key to weight loss is having the willpower to suffer through hunger pangs," El-Amin says. "But most dieters fail. What they're missing is a feeling of satisfaction." To prevent relapses, El-Amin advises eating meals that are not only balanced but also gratifying. Data from the Israeli

Morning is an ideal time to satisfy your sweet tooth.

of cottage cheese and eggs—two with the yolk, one without—on whole grain toast, an eight-ounce container of low-fat yogurt on the side, plus a fudge brownie.)

After eight months, the dessert-at-breakfast group had lost an average of 38 more pounds per person than the traditional dieters. An interesting twist occurred halfway through the study: During the first 16 weeks, both groups dropped about the same amount of weight. But over the next 16 weeks, the big-breakfast eaters continued to slim down (losing another 15 pounds) while the small-breakfast eaters gained back more than 75 percent of the

study bears out her theory: The dessert-at-breakfast subjects had significantly less desire for sweets and fatty foods during the day than the subjects on the more traditional diet.

Jakubowicz's golden rule for lasting weight loss? It actually seems quite simple when she boils down her findings. "If you're hungry before lunch, you didn't eat enough protein in the morning, and if you crave a sweet in the afternoon, you forgot your cookie at breakfast."

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EARLY-BIRD SPECIALS

Not a mousse-in-the-morning person? We asked Sue Ann Gleason, the culinary nutritionist behind the blog *Chocolate for Breakfast*, to suggest three A.M.-appropriate indulgences.*

No-Bake Chocolate Almond Oat Bars

Heat $\frac{1}{4}$ cup honey, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup each coconut oil and almond butter, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. sea salt, and 1 tsp. each vanilla and cinnamon in a saucepan over low heat. Combine $\frac{1}{4}$ cup each chopped almonds, chopped walnuts, and dark chocolate chips; $\frac{1}{4}$ cup each sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, and goji berries; and 1 cup rolled oats in a bowl. Stir wet ingredients into dry ingredients. Press into a greased 8" x 8" pan and refrigerate until hardened. Cut into 16 bars.

Banana-Pear Pudding with Chocolate Chips

To make 4 servings, combine 4 ripe pears and 4 ripe bananas in a blender. Then sprinkle "pudding" with dark chocolate chips.

Chocolate Zucchini Bread

Preheat oven to 350°. Add 1 cup each buckwheat flour and cane sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cocoa powder, 1 tsp. baking powder, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. each salt and cinnamon, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chocolate chips to a bowl and stir. In another bowl, stir 2 cups shredded zucchini, 1 tsp. vanilla extract, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup each coconut oil and mashed, cooked sweet potato, and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Greek-style plain yogurt. Fold dry ingredients into wet mixture until well combined. Lightly oil or butter 4 small loaf pans or one 8" loaf pan and pour in batter. Bake 50 to 60 minutes. Cool before slicing.

**Recipes are not part of a diet plan.*