Just for the Health of It

Wake Up! It's time for breakfast!

Wake up! It's time to celebrate. The fast is over and it's time to give yourself something delicious. What a great way to start the day. The good news is that eating a healthy breakfast is a habit that will serve you well throughout life.

Breakfast gets your metabolism going. Every cell in your body needs some fuel, and after a night's sleep it's time to refuel. Studies have shown that those of us who eat breakfast are less likely to overeat at lunch, and are more able to think clearly and problem-solve more effectively during the morning hours. Also, you might want to do an informal poll to see if the breakfast eaters in your life are more pleasant, less restless and irritable as some reports claim.

The best breakfasts are a mix of complex carbohydrates, protein, and a little heart healthy fat. If you're pressed for time in the morning, you can prepare something before you go to bed.

It's not just about cereal, eggs, and toast anymore. There are lots of great alternatives to traditional breakfasts. Here are a few suggestions to try:

- Top a mini bagel with a slice of reduced fat cheese and decorate with vegetables and fruit. How about a slice of red pepper for a smile, strips of salmon for curls, raisins for eyes, a baby carrot for a nose. Make it a real "artists" breakfast this weekend.

- Try a "Banana Dog". Spread some peanut butter on a whole wheat hot dog roll, add the banana, and top with fruit, jam, or some whimsical choice of your own.

- Put a few slices of avocado on toast and top with a sprinkle of reduced fat feta.

- Create your own "signature" smoothie. Start a contest at work.

- Leftovers from the night before can be just the thing.

Good, nutritious food in the morning will get you off to the right start. Set the pace for a healthy day. Eat, enjoy, and use your imagination.