

## Extension

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## Should I Wake Up To Oatmeal or Yogurt?

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### What should you eat for breakfast to keep your heart healthy?

Oatmeal is a whole grain that contains soluble fiber and has been shown to reduce cholesterol levels. **Yogurt** is a low-fat dairy product. **Let's put the two together!**

Each provides important nutrients, and both are low in calories and fat, depending on the variety you eat. For a well-rounded breakfast, include both yogurt and oatmeal for the energy needed to get through the day.

### YOGURT

A wide variety of yogurt is available, but read the labels closely, as many are high in sugar and fat. Choose plain, fat-free or low-fat yogurt and add your own toppings, such as fresh fruit, for health benefits. Like most dairy products, yogurt is a good source of calcium. Even people who are lactose intolerant often find they can eat it without stomach troubles. Live active cultures found in some varieties of yogurt, can improve intestinal health.

### OATMEAL

Oatmeal is a good source of fiber. Adequate amounts of fiber, and a diet low in saturated fats, lowers the risk of developing heart disease. A 1/2-cup serving of uncooked oats provides 4 grams of fiber, 2 of which are soluble fiber. Soluble fiber helps reduce levels of LDL, or bad, cholesterol.

\*Packets of instant oatmeal are often high in sugar; a better choice is plain rolled oats or steel-cut oats. Or make your own packets of oatmeal, which is less expensive and healthier.

### WEIGHT LOSS

Eating breakfast is a good start to losing weight. Missing breakfast can trigger a response in the body to store fat, leading to weight gain. Fat-free yogurt and oatmeal are good choices for breakfast when you want to lose weight. The fiber in oatmeal can help you feel full, as can the protein in yogurt.

### VITAMINS AND MINERALS

The calcium in yogurt is important for healthy teeth and strong bones. Yogurt also contains potassium, which is important for heart health. A serving of plain oats provides 10% of your recommended daily intake of iron.

## Let's Talk

Most kids will enjoy deciding what to make for any family meal. Talk to them about making choices and planning a balanced meal. Some might even want to help shop for ingredients and prepare the meal. At the store, teach kids to check out food labels to begin understanding what to look for. In the kitchen, select age-appropriate tasks so kids can play a part without getting injured or feeling overwhelmed.



## Recipe for Health:

### Refrigerator Yogurt Oatmeal

This easy, no-cook oatmeal is convenient and packed with nutrition. Make it in individual canning jars for a perfect serving size and an easy grab-and-go meal straight from the fridge (it's eaten cold). Each serving is high in protein, calcium, fiber; and low in fat & sugar.

#### Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup uncooked old fashioned rolled oats
- 1/3 cup skim milk or your choice
- 1/4 cup low-fat Greek yogurt (if using regular yogurt add less milk or it will be thin)
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla , almond, or favorite extract
- 1 tablespoon honey, jam, or favorite sweetener (optional)
- 1/4 to 1/3 cup fruit, or enough to fill jar



#### Directions:

In a 1 cup jar, add oats, milk, yogurt, extract, and sweetener. Put lid on jar and shake until well combined. Remove lid, add desired fruit and stir until mixed throughout. Return lid to jar and refrigerate overnight or as long as 2-3 days depending on the ripeness of the fruit. Top off with fruit or other topping and enjoy.

### Make Your Own Instant Oatmeal Packets

Children love their own flavored packets of oatmeal. Save on your grocery bill by making your own instant packets! Even very young children can 'dump' together the measured oatmeal, sugar or spices!

#### For each packet you will need:

- A plastic snack or sandwich bag
- Dash of salt, optional
- ½ cup quick oats
- Other optional ingredients, as desired

Put dry oatmeal into bag. Add dash of salt and other optional ingredients. Close bag and store for future use.

To Use: Empty packet into a microwave safe bowl. Stir in 1-cup water or milk. Microwave on HIGH 2½ to 3 minutes; stir before serving.

#### Variations:

- Apple Raisin Cinnamon Oatmeal—to each packet, add 1 teaspoon of sugar, ¼ teaspoon cinnamon and 2 Tablespoons chopped, dried apples, 2 Tablespoons raisins.
- Cocoa Oatmeal—Add 1 teaspoon baking cocoa and 1 teaspoon sugar to each packet OR 2 teaspoons 'quick-type' chocolate drink powder

Other optional ingredients: dried banana chips, small pieces of walnuts , almonds, dried cranberries, other dried fruits.

*Adapted from January 2001 Food, Fun and Fitness Newsletter, by Jan Temple, ISU Extension*