By Dr. Ramona Warren

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, however many people either rush out the door skipping breakfast or start their morning eating "dessert." Marketing companies have led us to believe that cereal, sweet rolls, doughnuts, toast, biscuits, Pop-Tarts, instant oatmeal, instant grits, yogurt with fruit "on the bottom," and other sugar-laden, carb-loaded products are what we should eat to start our day.

A healthy breakfast kick-starts your metabolism, helping you burn calories throughout the day. Having the right nutrients in the morning will improve your energy throughout the day, as well as improve your memory and concentration, reduce "brain fog," lower "bad" LDL cholesterol, reduce sugar cravings and lower your risk for diabetes, heart disease and obesity. The National Weight Control Registry states that, "78 percent of people who were successful in keeping weight off over a period of time ate breakfast.”

So what is a "healthy" breakfast? The key ingredients to start your day are quality protein and healthy fats. Below are a few healthy breakfast recipes to help get your day off to a good start.

**Coconut Granola**

*A grain-free, healthy alternative to cereal.*

*Serves: 4+*

*Recipe courtesy of Wellness Mama*

**Ingredients:**

2 cups coconut chips (you can find these at Trader Joes or shop online)

1 cup nuts of choice (I like a mix of cashews, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds and pecans)

¼ cup maple syrup OR ¼ cup honey

¼ cup coconut oil

Optional: vanilla (1 tsp) , cinnamon (dash) , chia seeds, raisins or other dried fruit of choice (up to ½ cup)

**Instructions:**

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Melt coconut oil, honey/maple syrup in a small saucepan until starting to bubble and simmer. Add vanilla if using. In a large bowl, mix the coconut chips and nuts and any optional ingredients. Pour wet mixture over the dry ingredients and mix well. The consistency will vary depending on the honey, coconut chips, and coconut oil you use. If there is not enough of the honey mixture to lightly coat all of the ingredients, add slightly more melted coconut oil and honey in equal parts. Spread on a parchment paper lined baking dish. Bake for 15-20 until starting to brown. Remove and let cool, then crumble into pieces. Store in an airtight jar and use within two weeks.

**Egg White Mini Frittatas**

*Multiple studies have shown that eggs do NOT raise your cholesterol levels and are considered by many to be the “perfect food” since they contain all the essential amino acids. Most people can eat an egg a day and as many egg whites as desired, however, make sure you purchase organic or farm fresh eggs. Make these frittatas in advance and store in the refrigerator. You can reheat them for a quick breakfast and serve with a side of protein or vegetables*.

*Recipe courtesy of Paleo Grubs*

**Ingredients:**

24 egg whites

1/2 red bell pepper, finely diced

1/2 medium onion, finely diced

1 tsp garlic powder

2 cups spinach

Salt and pepper, to taste

**Directions:**

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease a muffin tin with coconut oil spray. In a medium bowl, stir the egg whites together with the garlic powder, salt, and pepper. Fill the muffin cups with equal amounts of the vegetables. Pour two egg whites into each cup. Bake for 25-30 minutes until the eggs are set. Remove from the oven and set on a cooling rack. Serve warm or store in resealable bags in the refrigerator.

**Southwestern Breakfast Bowl**

*This hearty Paleo option will keep you fuller, longer and is also packed with nutrients and flavor.*

*Recipe courtesy of Paleo Grubs*

**Ingredients:**

2 large sweet potatoes, peeled and diced

Extra virgin olive oil, for drizzling

Salt and pepper, to taste

1 tsp chili powder

2 strips bacon

1/2 medium yellow onion, diced

1/2 green bell pepper, diced

1/2 red bell pepper, diced

1 small jalapeno, seeded and diced

2-3 cups fresh spinach

2 eggs

1 tsp ghee

1 avocado, pitted and diced, optional

**Directions:**

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Place the diced sweet potatoes on a rimmed baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, and chili powder. Bake for 15-20 minutes, turning once. Meanwhile, cook the bacon in a skillet over medium heat. Remove to a paper towel- lined plate and crumble. Add the onion, bell peppers, and jalapeno to the skillet and sauté for 5-6 minutes until soft. Lastly add in the spinach and cook until wilted.

In a separate skillet, melt the ghee. Cook the eggs to desired doneness, seasoning with salt and pepper. To assemble, divide the sweet potatoes between two bowls. Top with the veggie mixture, followed by the egg, crumbled bacon, and avocado if using.

**Berry Protein Smoothie**

*The key to a healthy protein shake is to make sure it contains quality protein and you don’t overdo it on the fruit! Although fruit is a natural food with many nutrients, too much can throw your blood sugar out of balance and lead to low energy and sugar cravings later in the day. Limit your fruit to one-half to one cup, and focus more on berries which are loaded with antioxidants, have many nutrients, and have less impact on your blood sugar levels.*

*Recipe courtesy of Dr. Josh Axe*

**INGREDIENTS**:

1/3 can coconut milk

1 scoop vanilla protein powder (either whey or pea protein) or 2 raw eggs (cage free organic)

1 c. frozen berries (no sugar added)

1/2 tsp. Cinnamon

stevia to taste

**DIRECTIONS**:

Place all ingredients in blender and blend until frothy. Add more liquid, if needed, for desired consistency. Serve immediately.