A big breakfast may be key to losing weight

Breakfast with a high glycemic index is harmful and can lead to cravings later in the day

New Delhi, 12 August 2017: In a recently conducted study, sedentary, obese women lost almost 5 times as much weight on the “big breakfast” diet compared to women following a traditional, restrictive low-carbohydrate diet. As per the IMA, having a good breakfast made up of carbohydrates and lean protein, can help lessen cravings and hunger during the rest of the day, which can lead to significant weight loss.

Eating breakfast with high glycemic foods may be harmful. After eating cereals or a doughnut, the blood sugar and insulin levels spike. Once this blood sugar is used up, the body will still have excess insulin circulating, which leads to hunger pangs and craving for carbohydrates.

Speaking about this, **Padma Shri Awardee Dr K K Aggarwal, National President Indian Medical Association (IMA) and President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI)** and **Dr RN Tandon – Honorary Secretary General IMA in a joint statement**, said, “Treating obese people should entail treatment for carb cravings and hunger first. In the morning, the body is primed to look for food. Metabolism is revived and the levels of cortisol and adrenaline are at the highest. The brain needs energy instantly, and if one doesn’t eat or eats too little, the brain tried to find another fuel source. To do this, it activates an emergency system that pulls energy from muscle, destroying muscle tissue in the process. Then when you eat later, the body and brain are still in high-alert mode, so the body saves energy from the food as fat.”

The levels of the brain chemical serotonin are highest in the morning. Craving levels are at the lowest and one may not feel like eating. As the day wears on, serotonin levels dip, and one craves for chocolate or cookies, and such similar foods.

Adding further, **Dr Aggarwal**, said, “Eating processed food causes an increase in the serotonin levels, and the body begins to associate good feelings with them, making it an addictive cycle. A high protein-carbohydrate mix in breakfast gives the body the initial energy boost it needs in the morning. As protein is digested slowly, it reduces hunger pangs. If you crave chocolate, eat it in the morning as having a small piece of chocolate or candy when serotonin levels are high, won’t make it taste as good. The brain, thus, won’t feel the same serotonin boost, and this will eventually help cut down any cravings.”
Here are some tips for smarter snacking.

- **Go for the grain** Whole-grain snacks and whole-grain cereals can give you some energy with staying power.
- **Repurpose food** Many breakfast foods can be repurposed as a nutritious snack later in the day.
- **Try a “hi–low combination”** Combine a small amount of something with healthy fat, like peanut butter, with a larger amount of something very light, like apple slices or celery sticks.
- **Go nuts** Unsalted nuts and seeds make for great snacks. Almonds, walnuts, peanuts, roasted pumpkin seeds, cashews, hazelnuts, filberts, and other nuts and seeds contain many beneficial nutrients and are more likely to leave you feeling full.
- **Snack mindfully** Don’t eat your snack while doing something else like surfing the Web, watching TV, or working at your desk.
- **Carry healthy snacks** Carry a small bag of healthful snacks in your pocket or purse to avoid unhealthy snacking at work.

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**About IMA**: Indian Medical Association is the only representative, national voluntary organization of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors as well as the well being of the community at large. It has its Headquarter in Delhi and State / Terr. Branches in 30 States and Union Territories. It has over 2, 60,000 doctors as its members through more than 1765 active local branches spread across the country.

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