**DATE:** July 20, 2020

**Healthy Breakfast.** We have always been told, “breakfast is the most important meal.” Making sure you and your family eat a healthy breakfast is the best way to start each day on the right track. A healthy breakfast can help optimize mental function, support healthy weight goals, and build a strong immune system. The U.S. Department of Agriculture ([www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)) recommends a healthy meal include a balance of fruit, vegetables, grains, and protein.

A healthy breakfast should include, but is not limited to, the following components:

* Whole grains such as oats, whole wheat bread, or quinoa
* Lean protein such as eggs or turkey sausage
* Fruit or vegetables such as berries, bananas, broccoli, or spinach

These breakfast components assist our bodies with day to day bodily functions. Whole grains give us energy and fiber. Protein helps to keep us fuller longer, and fruit and vegetables provide us with vitamins, antioxidants, and fiber. Amy Valdez, Extension Program Specialist with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension adds, “this combination of food is going to make sure you stay satisfied throughout the day and will keep you energized and focused.”

Meal planning and prepping are two relatively simple ways to help you stay on track.

* **Plan** - Planning is key when it comes to breakfast. Create a menu of breakfast options for the week. When shopping, stick to these foods to help reduce the chance of choosing unhealthy options and to save you time and money.
* **Prepare**– If time is limited in the morning, we tend to choose the first foods we see, which may not always be the healthiest. This can be avoided by either preparing the entire week’s meals or simply prepare portions of your breakfast to save you time.

If you need a few ideas to get you started, Overnight Vanilla Oats and Egg Muffins are two of my favorite breakfast on the go recipes. Visit <http://agentsarah.blogspot.com/> for additional recipes and variations.

**Overnight Vanilla Oats** – 1 cup oats, 1 cup vanilla flavored almond milk, and ¼ cup of your favorite nuts and/or fruit are optional. Mix the oats and almond milk together and pour into two 8 oz wide mouth jars with lids, splitting evenly. Secure the lids and refrigerate overnight. You may add your optional items with the initial mixture or in the morning, depending on how you like them (depending on your optional add-in, soaking overnight in the mixture may make them mushy). Oats may be stored up to five days in the refrigerator, just remember, the longer they sit, the softer your oats will become. (Makes 2 servings. Serving Size: 8 oz. Per Serving (before optional add-ins): 195 Calories, 3.9g Fat, 34.7g Carbohydrates, 5.9g Protein.)

**Egg Muffins** – 5 eggs, ½ cup real bacon bits, ½ cup grated cheddar cheese, salt and pepper to taste. Preheat oven to 400°F. Grease a 6-count muffin tin (or use silicon muffin baking cups). Mix ingredients together in a bowl. Divide evenly in muffin cups (about ¾ full). Bake until muffins are set and beginning to brown (roughly 12-15 minutes). Muffins may be stored up to five days in the refrigerator. Just grab one, heat it up (or eat it cold), and go! (Makes 6 servings. Serving size: 1 Muffin. Per Serving: 124 Calories, 8.8g Fat, .4g Carbohydrates, 11g Protein.)

If you have questions or concerns, please contact me, (903) 473-4580 or email Sarah.Latham@ag.tamu.edu. You may also read more about this and many more topics on my blog, <http://agentsarah.blogspot.com/>. Follow Rains County AgriLife on Facebook for additional information and upcoming events.