

The Cost of Skipping Breakfast: Time to Educate Young Adults

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The first meal of the day which breaks the overnight fast is known as breakfast. According to the nutrition science, breakfast is the most important meal of the day that prevents metabolic diseases like diabetes. Regular consumption of the breakfast was reported to provide macro and micro nutrients, lowers body mass index, improves cognitive functions like attention, memory and helps to improve the quality of life. It was reported that consuming breakfast regularly decreases the stress, depression and improves the mood. Though the exact mechanism is not clear, it is assumed that the carbohydrates in the breakfast provide glucose to the brain after the overnight fast.

The prevalence of skipping breakfast is more in children and the adolescents in most of the countries including India. The most probable cause for skipping breakfast is ill managed time due to excessive use of electronic gadgets, laziness, over enthusiasm, study stress, etc. Inappropriate sleeping habits and time make them to skip breakfast. The second major cause especially is applicable to females is that they are more beauty conscious, to maintain their physique they skip breakfast. Third main cause is unavailability of the desired food. As most of the institutional canteens have a fixed and scheduled breakfasts and student skips breakfast if there choose or desired breakfast is not available. This issue can be sorted out by providing milk, egg, bread with butter or jam in addition to the regular breakfast. This is to ensure the child has something nutritious to stay active. Fourth major cause is lack of appetite. As

the students skip the breakfast regularly, their body adapts to the same and they will not feel hunger even after the overnight fast. Unhealthy eating and sleeping habits like having junk food and having dinner at late hours, night outs, waking up late etc; would also be an additive ailments to skip breakfast. Fifth major cause is the economic status of the individuals enabling them to skip breakfast.

It was found that about 8% of the high school students skip breakfast daily [1]. Further, it was reported that one in four young adults skip the breakfast. The major age group that skips breakfast belongs to less than 25 years of age [2]. It is known that this age group needs to consume balanced diet because crucial development of cognitive, psychological and physical functions occurs in this age [3]. An article in ASEE prism notes the surprisingly widespread prevalence of hunger in young adults in the US colleges due to economic reasons and limited timings of the canteens and refers to implemented solutions such as food donations, collecting unconsumed food and high nutrition packaged food that have been implemented. If the students attend classes by skipping breakfast, may lead to headache and loss of concentration further affecting the academic performance adversely and all these is due to low or reduced glucose levels making the brain inactive. It was reported that the prevalence of cardio vascular disease and hypertension is more in the habitual breakfast skippers. Hence, it is the need of time to consider the topic seriously and educate the children and adolescents regarding the importance of having breakfast regularly

and to educate them the advantages of having breakfast and complications of skipping breakfast. Systematic review in this area is needed to understand the prevalence of this issue among young adults in India and the potential solutions to address them. Of course, one approach would be to train individuals, to acquire the discipline of maintaining healthy lifestyle.

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