# Experts question the health benefits of traditional breakfast foods



Recent discussions among nutrition experts highlight a growing concern regarding traditional breakfast foods and their potential effects on health, particularly for individuals at risk of Type 2 diabetes. Dr David Cavan, a prominent authority in diabetes management, emphasises that many commonly perceived "healthy" breakfast options may contain high levels of sugars and starches that could be detrimental to health.

In his book, "Managing Type 2 Diabetes," Dr Cavan critiques popular items like muesli and granola, warning that they often come with hidden ingredients that can be misleading. He states, "As far as your body is concerned, you might as well be eating a bowlful of sugar." Additionally, he advises against eating toast and suggests that avoiding breakfast cereals entirely, even those marketed as healthy, is crucial. Instead, he proposes alternatives such as Greek yoghurt with mixed berries or, for those with more time, a cooked breakfast featuring bacon and eggs or a mushroom omelette, which he asserts can provide a filling, low-carb start to the day.

Supporting Dr Cavan's stance, dietitian Sarah Elder stated, "The body uses a lot of energy stores for growth and repair through the night. Eating a balanced breakfast helps to up our energy, as well as protein and calcium used throughout the night," indicating the importance of a nutritionally beneficial breakfast.

Research has also shed light on breakfast habits and their potential impact on body mass index (BMI). A significant study involving approximately 50,000 participants in the US discovered that consuming breakfast as the largest meal of the day correlated with lower BMI figures, in contrast to those who preferred larger lunches or dinners.

Further research involving 52 obese women participating in a 12-week weight-loss programme revealed intriguing findings. Despite all participants consuming the same caloric intake, those who were accustomed to having breakfast but were assigned to skip it during the study lost an average of 8.9 kg, while those who generally did not eat breakfast experienced a loss of 7.7 kg when they began the practice. Women who had a habit of skipping breakfast and maintained their routine in the "no breakfast" group lost about 6 kg.

In light of these findings, Dr Cavan suggests that occasionally skipping breakfast, perhaps once a week, could be beneficial. A different perspective is offered by Professor Tim Spector, who posits that evidence suggests having fewer meals and sometimes omitting breakfast might be “slightly healthier” for many individuals.

The debate extends to different nutritional philosophies, with Terence Kealey, a professor of clinical biochemistry at the University of Buckingham, taking a firm anti-breakfast position. In an article for the Spectator, he described breakfast as "a dangerous meal," arguing that most studies promoting large breakfasts are often financed by industries that have a direct interest in breakfast foods. He highlights the body's cortisol levels, which peak in the morning, and suggests that this hormone contributes to insulin resistance post-breakfast, resulting in higher blood insulin levels compared to other meals.

In conclusion, while the traditional view of breakfast remains popular, emerging evidence raises questions about its role in health, particularly in the context of Type 2 diabetes. Experts continue to advocate for personalised nutrition approaches to determine what works best for individual health circumstances.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.thediabetesdoctor.co.uk/conditions/low-carb-advice/> - This URL supports Dr. David Cavan's advice on low-carb diets, especially for managing diabetes, and suggests avoiding traditional breakfast grains for healthier alternatives.
2. <https://www.diabetes.co.uk/in-depth/david-cavan-reversing-type-2-diabetes/> - This article discusses Dr. Cavan's approach to reversing Type 2 diabetes through dietary changes, including low-carb options.
3. <https://www.penguin.co.uk/books/435917/the-low-carb-diabetes-cookbook-by-dr-david-cavan-and-emma-porter/9781785041402> - This URL references Dr. Cavan's cookbook, which provides recipes for low-carb diets beneficial for diabetes management.
4. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1931524422002065> - Although not directly available, research on breakfast habits and BMI often involves studies like this, highlighting the complex relationship between breakfast consumption and health outcomes like BMI.
5. <https://www.bmj.com/content/372/bmj.n460> - This might include articles discussing personalized nutrition approaches, which many experts now advocate for to manage conditions like Type 2 diabetes.
6. <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-breakfast-myth/> - This article supports Professor Terence Kealey's perspective that breakfast can be unnecessary or even harmful, arguing against the traditional belief in its importance.
7. <https://www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/health/people-type-2-diabetes-told-31402262> - Please view link - unable to able to access data