



WHAT THE HEART! YOU ARE WHEN YOU EAT & NOT WHAT YOU EAT

“No, you can’t have any more food, it’s bed time!” That was my mom back in the day. Can’t blame her, I had a freakishly slow metabolism, still demanded 10 snacks a day in between regular meals and would resort to the most dramatic, conniving food begging if she yelled no.

WHETHER YOU’RE TRYING TO WHITTLE YOUR WAIST OR TRIM THE BODY FAT PERCENTAGE FOR A HEALTHIER HEART, NEW STUDIES SHOW THAT BETTER HEALTH NO LONGER MEANS “YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT”. INSTEAD, IT IS MORE ACCURATE TO SAY, “YOU ARE WHEN YOU EAT”.

THE CIRCADIAN RHYTHM - THE CLOCK THAT DICTATES YOUR EATING PATTERN



The term sounds science-y but circadian rhythm simply means your body’s internal biological clock which keeps you in sync with cycles of day and night since you were a baby.

Unfortunately unlike an actual alarm clock, it doesn’t come with a snooze button.

SO IF YOU’RE CROSSING THREE TIME ZONES IN A DAY, PULLING AN ALL-NIGHTER, SKIPPING BREAKFAST AND EATING OUT OF CONTROL BY EVENING - YOUR CIRCADIAN RHYTHM IS OUT OF WHACK.

For the first time in nine decades of its history, the American Heart Association (AHA) came up with a 27-page “scientific statement” on meal timing and heart health.

They looked at a large body of research and found that we are eating way too much, erratically and around the clock. This disruption in the body’s circadian rhythm puts us at an increased risk of diabetes, obesity, depression and heart attacks.

15 PERCENT IT’S BELIEVED THAT UP TO 15 PERCENTAGE OF OUR GENES MIGHT BE REGULATED BY CIRCADIAN RHYTHM.

THE STUDY FOUND THAT THOSE WHO KICKSTART THE DAY WITH A POWER PACKED BREAKFAST WERE NOT RAVENOUS THROUGH THE DAY, THEIR TICKER WAS IN TOP SHAPE, THEY WERE LESS LIKELY TO HAVE HIGH CHOLESTEROL, HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE AND HEART DISEASE THAN THOSE WHO DON’T MAKE TIME TO STOMACH A MEAL.

“Organs have clocks. There is a timing and frequency to give nutrients to your organs. In the morning you’re active and the digestive enzymes work at their maximum ability to process foods than night, when you should ideally be shutting down,” says Dr Nilesh Gautam, Senior Interventional Cardiologist, Asian Heart Institute.

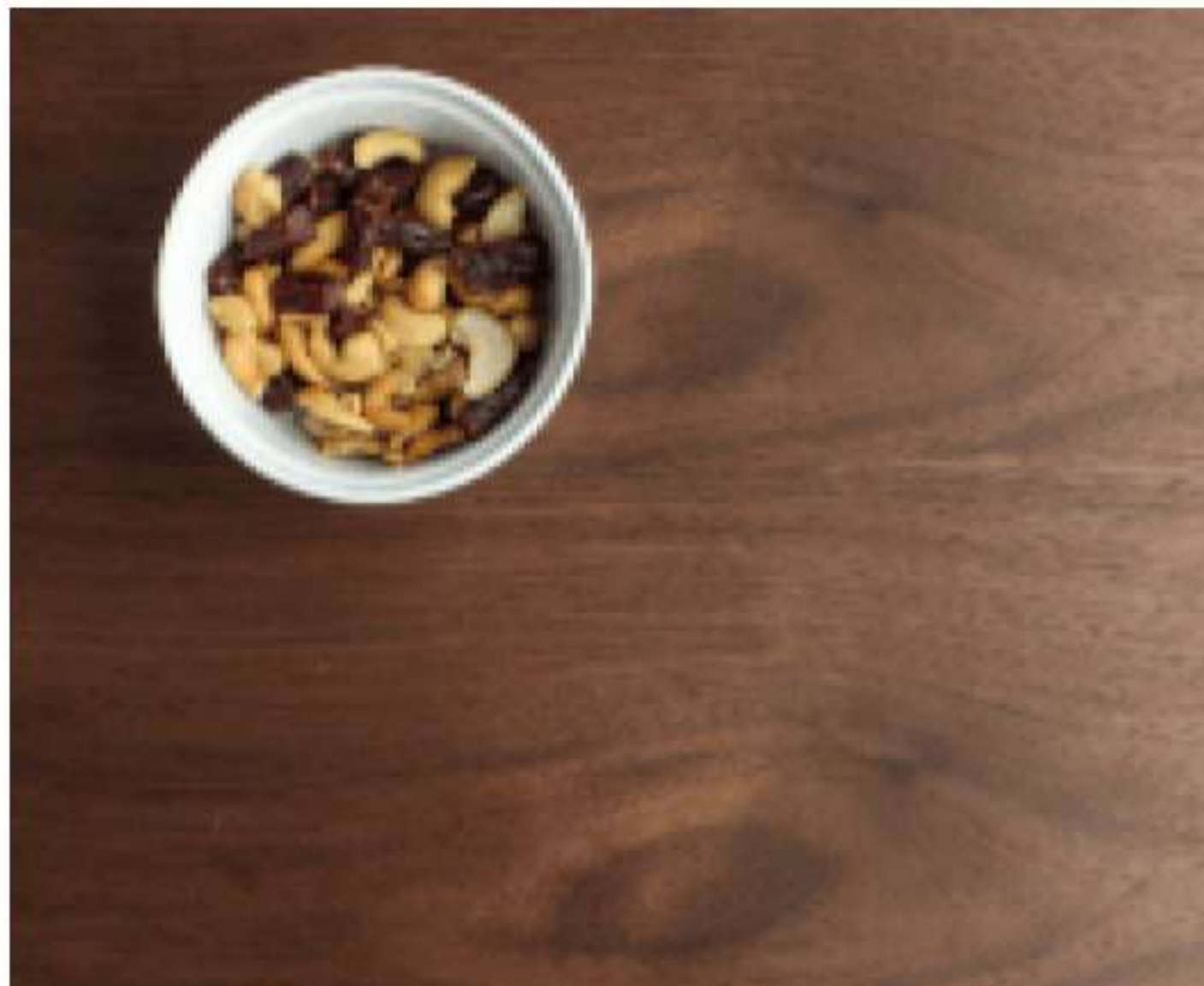
So is breakfast the magical elixir to heart health? What if you don’t need a pick-me-up in the morning?

SHAKE UP YOUR WAKE UP REALLY THE BEST FOR A HEALTHY TICKER?

The AHA studied 20- to 39-year-olds who devoured their brekkie religiously and compared them with the ones that skipped this routine - breakfast eaters were 31 percent less likely to be overweight or obese and have a fine ticker.

Now the fine print:

THE BREAKFAST-EATING-HEART-HEALTHY CLUB DID NOT STUFF THEMSELVES WITH MEANINGLESS CALORIES FROM CROISSANTS OR MUFFINS - INSTEAD THEY CONTROLLED THEIR INTAKE TO ONLY 400 TO 500 CALORIES FROM NUTRIENT-RICH FOODS WITHIN THE FIRST TWO HOURS OF WAKING UP.



This makes sense.

Scientists estimate that 75 percent of people feel famished within an hour of waking up.

That means the remaining quarter have a genetic predisposition to skip the first meal of the day or will their diet plans spiral out of control by dinner?

MORE RESEARCH IS NEEDED TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE TIME AND FREQUENCY OF MEALS, BUT I DO RECOMMEND A WHOLESOME BREAKFAST OF HEALTHY FATS, PROTEIN AND CARBS TO AVOID INFLAMMATION AND DISEASES.

Bottom-line: You do you. Love your am fix of porridge? Don’t stop. In fact, add a dose of protein and take the fickle, ever-evolving world of nutrition science with a grain of salt on your avocado toast.

MEAL FREQUENCY

Snacking was a term invented in the 80s.



India caught up with it in the 90s and now there are all sorts of bizarre diet trends which advise you to eat 6 to 7 mini-meals in between the three big ones!

Does nibbling work? Or it makes you a grazing zombie who is stuck to the office vending machine with a stash of snacks?

SNACKS DOES NOT MEAN A BAG OF CHIPS. THERE IS AMPLE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THAT SMALL MEALS WORK IF YOU INCREASE THE NUMBER OF MEALS AND NOT THE CALORIES. EAT RIGHT AND CAP THE CALORIES TO A MAXIMUM OF 250 TO 300 A MINI MEAL AND YOU WILL NOTICE LOWER CHOLESTEROL, LOWER INSULIN LEVELS WITHIN A MONTH.

Bottom-line: Rejoice! Science gives you permission to nibble all day. As long as it’s carrot and cucumber sticks. But eating more isn’t for everyone. If you’re like me and get ravenous when you see food, stick to the good old three square meals a day plan.