



# Nutritional Adequacy of Breakfast: Its relationship to daily nutrient intake among children, adolescents and adults

## Key findings of the 'India Breakfast Habits Study'

### Urban Indians having a nutritionally inadequate Breakfast

- 1 in 4 claim to skip breakfast. However among teens, 1 in 3 claim to skip breakfast.
- 'No time' and 'not hungry' cited as most common reasons. Is hectic pace of life with late dinner to be blamed?
- A whopping 72% of all subjects are skimping or having a nutritionally inadequate breakfast highlighting the lack of awareness of the nutritional aspects of breakfast.
- Gender bias in breakfast. Greater breakfast inadequacy among females than males more so in adolescents and adults.
- Nutritional adequacy goes down with age. A definite cause of concern since the younger generation looks up to adults as role models.
- Amongst all 4 cities, the breakfast nutrient profile is the best in Chennai. Is it because of the existence of well-defined breakfast foods?
- More adolescent girls (18%) than boys (4%) are skipping breakfast. This probably is linked to weight control issues.
- Nutritional inadequacy of the average breakfast meal. The breakfast for all subjects is poor for all nutrients studied except calcium.
- Nutrients missed at breakfast are not being compensated for through the consumption of a mid-morning meal or through other meals in the day, thereby highlighting utmost importance of the first meal of the day.

## Importance of Breakfast

Breakfast, being the most important meal of the day, is a key source of nutrients like vitamins and minerals, which are essential for an overall healthy lifestyle. While there is ambiguity in the way breakfast is defined, there is consistent literature on the health benefits of a nutritionally adequate breakfast. While a nutritionally adequate breakfast has been shown to be important for a healthy lifestyle, the importance of consuming a nourishing breakfast is often being overlooked. Also there is paucity of published research to establish breakfast eating habits in India and the attitudes and perceptions of Indians towards this important meal.

A cross-sectional study was conducted in Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai on a sample size of 3600 subjects, split across the age groups of 8 to 40+ years. In order to examine the attitudes, perceptions and eating behaviours at breakfast and the contribution to nutrient intakes from breakfast, the Research Centre, College of Home Science, Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai undertook this survey within a SEC A and B sample population supported by Kellogg India.





## Breakfast-Attitudes & Perception

### People in different cities view breakfast differently

- Most of the consumers across cities perceive 'breakfast' as 'something that is eaten in the mornings', 'a light meal', 'a meal that gives you energy and keeps you healthy'.
- Only 3% regard breakfast as essential.
- Breakfast is associated mainly with morning food (28%) – across centres and amongst both males and females, followed by 11% who perceive it to be giving energy and helping to maintain good health.

### Different foods perceived good for breakfast

- Of the modern list of breakfast options, 75% and 73% perceive cereals to be good breakfast options for kids and adults across cities.
- Choice of healthy breakfast items varies across cities. Parathas are considered healthy in Delhi (43%), bread (44%) and milk (39%) in Mumbai, idli (51%) and dosa (47%) in Chennai and milk (34%) and eggs (29%) in Kolkata.
- Milk and fruit combination is perceived as good for breakfast for kids in Delhi (77%) and Mumbai (81%), only milk is perceived as good in Delhi (69%) and Kolkata (60%).

### People display varied attitudes towards breakfast

- Breakfast should be light'- 84% of all subjects, and 'home cooked' (91%) is expressed by both genders across all age groups and cities.
- Fruits are perceived to add to the health quotient of breakfast by 79% of the subjects.
- A heavy breakfast makes me feel lethargic'- 61% of all subjects.

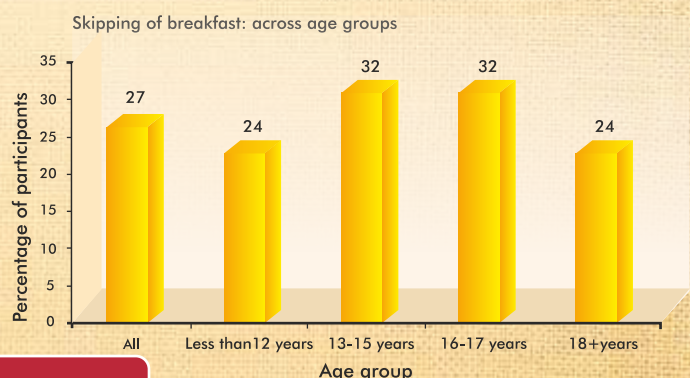
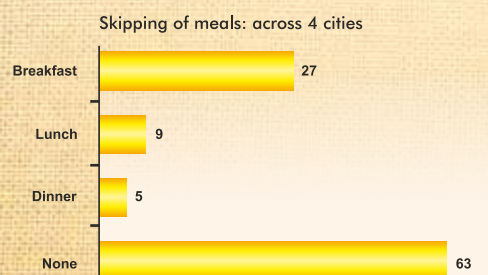
## Breakfast is the most commonly skipped meal

### The tendency to skip meals is seen in all age groups across all 4 cities

- More than a quarter (27%) people claim not to have breakfast while only 9% claim to skip lunch and as little as 5% claim to skip dinner. The figure below highlights this trend.

### Breakfast skipping common in all 4 metros cities

- Breakfast is skipped the most across Mumbai (34%) and Chennai (37%).
- More of adolescents (32%) skip breakfast as compared to children or adults.



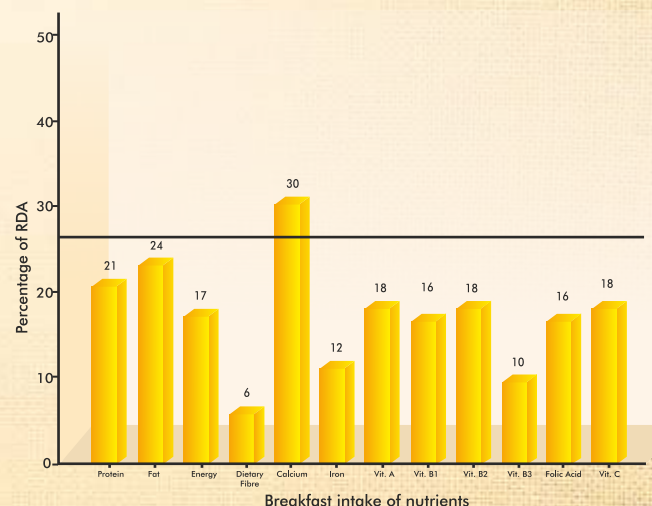
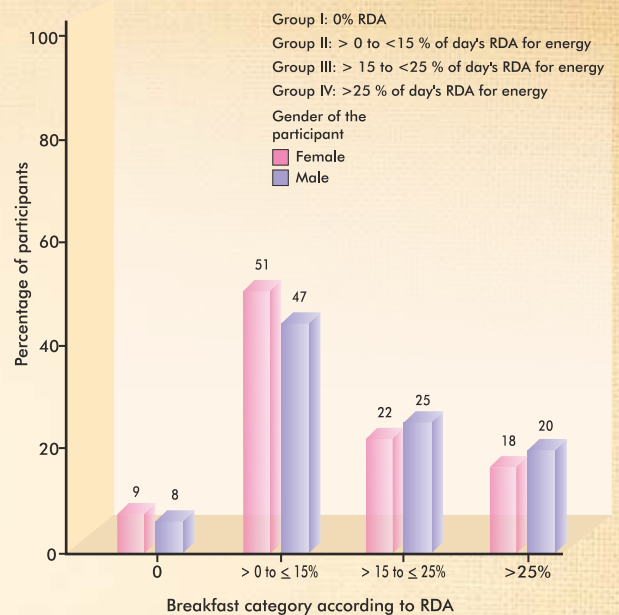




## People across all 4 cities are having a

- 81% of subjects are consuming a nutritionally poor breakfast (less than 25% of the day's Recommended Dietary Allowance [RDA] for energy).
- 72% of the subjects are not skipping breakfast, but having a breakfast that is inadequate in calories.
- The trend for an inadequate breakfast rather than no breakfast is seen across age groups.
- Breakfast picture is slightly better in children than in adults with less breakfast skipping (2% vs. 7% to 14%) and more breakfast adequacy (28% vs. 11% to 20%).
- Across age groups there is a tendency for females to be having a comparatively more inadequate breakfast (51% vs. 47%).
- The breakfast for all the people studied is poor for all nutrients except calcium. Calcium intake at 30% of the day's RDA is high due to the consumption of milk at breakfast.
- There are gross inadequacies in the intakes of iron and fibre and most B group vitamins in breakfast across all age groups.
- Women and Children default more at breakfast and qualitative inadequacies in breakfast are seen across all age /gender groups.

Breakfast adequacy across gender



## Reasons for Skipping Breakfast

- 'Time' is one of the biggest constraints (51%) for eating breakfast regularly (across cities, gender and ages), more so in Kolkata (68%).
- 'Not being hungry' is one of the key reasons coming out from skippers in Mumbai (40%).





## Inadequacy at breakfast not being made up through consumption of rest of the meals

- Across all age groups, breakfast inadequacies of nutrients like iron, fibre and certain B complex vitamins are not being compensated by the day's intake of food through other meals.
- The fat consumption across all age groups at 144% is approximately one and half times the RDA (100%). The difference is more in adults than children and adolescents. In Delhi, sources like fried snacks or oil/ghee in parathas and rotis and buffalo milk contribute to the fat consumed.

## Breakfast eating habits and nutrient intakes vary across cities - All cities having a nutritionally inadequate breakfast

- 79%, 76% and 75% of the subjects in Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata respectively are having an inadequate breakfast as against 60% in Chennai.
- The nutrient profile of breakfast is the best in Chennai, the day's nutrient profile is found to be the best in Delhi.

Although the caloric picture shows lesser skipping and more caloric adequacy in the diets of children vs. adults & men vs. women, qualitative inadequacies in breakfast are seen across all age/gender groups. Deficiencies in the intake of iron (an important micronutrient in the Indian context), fibre (important for health and well-being) & B complex vitamin are observed.

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