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Kickstart Your Day Right: 5 Tips for a Better Breakfast This September

Kristin Bogdonas, Illinois Extension nutrition & wellness educator



Breakfast is often hailed as the most important meal of the day, yet it's also the one most frequently skipped or rushed through. For many, breakfast consists of nothing more than a cup of coffee or a quick grab-and-go item, if it happens at all. This habit can set the tone for the entire day, leaving you feeling sluggish, unfocused, and hungry long before lunchtime. That's why Better Breakfast Month, observed every September, is a great opportunity to reassess your morning routine and adopt healthier habits. Here are five tips to build a better breakfast.

1. Plan Ahead for Success

Are you short on time in the morning? Prepare as much as possible the night before, whether it's setting out ingredients, pre-cooking items like eggs or oatmeal, or even making a complete breakfast that you can grab and go. Overnight oats, chia pudding, and smoothie packs are excellent options that can be prepared ahead of time.

2. Incorporate Protein for Sustained Energy

A breakfast high in protein can keep you feeling full and energized throughout the morning. Protein helps to stabilize blood sugar levels, which means you'll be less likely to experience a mid-morning energy crash. Eggs are a classic choice, offering a versatile and quick source of protein. If you prefer something sweet, try a protein-packed smoothie with ingredients like Greek yogurt, protein powder, and almond butter.

3. Don't Forget the Fiber

Fiber is essential for a healthy digestive system and can also help keep you feeling full. Foods rich in fiber slow down digestion, which means you'll have a steady release of energy throughout the morning. Whole grains, fruits, and vegetables are great sources of fiber. Consider starting your day with a bowl of oatmeal topped with fresh berries and nuts, or whole-grain toast with avocado and a side of fruit. These fiber-rich options are not only nutritious but also satisfying.

4. Include Healthy Fats

Healthy fats are a crucial part of a balanced breakfast. They help keep you full and provide essential fatty acids that support brain function. Avocado, nuts, seeds, and fatty fish, like salmon are all excellent sources of healthy fats. Try adding some sliced avocado to your eggs, sprinkling nuts on your yogurt or oatmeal, or incorporating a small portion of smoked salmon into your morning meal.

5. Balance Is Key

A well-balanced breakfast includes a mix of protein, healthy fats, fiber, and carbohydrates. This combination will keep you full and provide the necessary nutrients to power through your morning. Avoid breakfasts that are high in sugar and refined carbohydrates. Instead, opt for whole foods that provide sustained energy and nourishment.

By following these tips during Better Breakfast Month, you can set yourself up for a day of productivity, focus, and energy. A healthy breakfast doesn't have to be complicated or time-consuming, but with a little planning and creativity, it can become an enjoyable and essential part of your daily routine. This week, make breakfast a priority and switch up your morning routine and try one of the tips outlined today!



Five Fall Tips for Cool-Season Lawn Care

Adapted from *Good Growing*, by Chris Enroth, horticulture educator

1. As summer ends, lawn care for cool-season grasses—like Kentucky bluegrass, tall fescue, and perennial ryegrass—remains crucial. These lawns thrive in spring and fall but can suffer during summer. Here are five tips to revitalize your lawn as the season changes:
2. **Aerate:** Relieve soil compaction and reduce thatch by using a core aerator on damp soil. Let the soil plugs break down naturally.
3. **Overseed:** Spread new seed over your lawn. For bare spots, mix grass seed with a 50/50 blend of topsoil and compost, and keep it moist until germination.
4. **Fertilize:** Apply one pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet between mid-August and mid-September. Optionally, apply a late-season fertilizer after the last mowing.
5. **Mulch Clippings and Leaves:** Return nutrients to the lawn by mulching clippings and shredded leaves instead of bagging them.
6. **Control Perennial Weeds:** Fall is ideal for targeting broadleaf weeds like dandelions, as they send nutrients to their roots. Use a systemic herbicide for effective control.

For more lawn care tips, visit extension.illinois.edu/lawns or contact our Master Gardeners.

Have gardening questions?

Fill out an Ask the Master Gardener form online to get your gardening questions answered @

go.illinois.edu/AsktheMasterGardener

Or call the Illinois Extension Master Gardeners



HORT HELPLINE
217-300-0240



Fall Harvest of Horticulture

Sept 19, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Aledo Fire Station, Aledo, IL

Explore the Links Between Gardening, Weather, and Climate Resilience

Illinois Extension Master Gardeners of Mercer County invite you to the Fall Harvest of Horticulture—an evening dedicated to exploring the connections between gardening, weather, and climate resilience. Enjoy two expert-led presentations designed to enhance your gardening knowledge and deepen your understanding of the environment around you.

The first presentation by Steve Hilberg, the Illinois CoCoRaHS Coordinator will cover "**Garden Weather—A Part of the Big Picture.**" Gardeners, regardless of their expertise, are often keen observers of weather patterns. CoCoRaHS, the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow network, is a grassroots initiative where citizens can measure and share precipitation data from their own backyards. Learn how you can contribute to this nationwide effort and make your observations count in your local community and beyond.

Next, Emily Swihart, Illinois Extension horticulture educator, will present "**The Connection Between Our Trees and Climate Resilience.**" This engaging session will explore the relationship between trees in our home and community landscapes and the changing climate. Emily will provide insights into the vital role trees play in our environment, offer strategies for making informed planting choices, and discuss how climate change is impacting our urban forests.

Cost is \$10 person. Includes appetizers.

Sign up at

go.illinois.edu/FallHarvestHort

or call (309) 756-9978



Online Webinars & In-Person Classes



FOUR SEASONS GARDENING

Sept 10 @ 1:30 PM | Design Stunning, Personalized Landscapes Four Seasons Gardening Webinar Series

Learn how to start with the basics of landscape design to create a beautiful and functional outdoor space. [Emily Swihart](#), Extension horticulture educator, will share foundational knowledge of landscape design principles, explore design styles, and acquire the confidence to begin personalizing a landscape.

Register at go.illinois.edu/LandscapeDesign101



LESSONS FOR LIVING

Sept 26 @ 10 AM | Navigating Changes as We Age: Lesson for Living Series

Everyone is aging, and many changes happen along the way - physically, mentally, and financially - in about every aspect of our lives. This lesson will examine some of those changes and how to adopt a more accepting mindset that will result in improved well-being and possibly new opportunities!

Register at go.illinois.edu/NavigationChanges



Sept 11 @ 5-6 PM | Emergency Preparation Workshop & Kit Distribution | Coal Valley Library

Do you have your emergency kit packed and ready when disaster strikes? September is National Preparedness Month and a great time to make a plan for the unseen. Floods, fires, tornadoes, and power outages all pose a threat. Illinois Extension is offering a free community workshop to help you get prepared. Attendees will also receive a free duffel bag with essential items.

Space is limited and you must preregister. Call Angie Armstrong at the Robert Jones Public Library in Coal Valley at 309-799-3047.



Sept 17 @ 11:30 AM - 1:30 AM | Tree Equity in Action: Workshop & Tree Giveaway, Riverside Park, Moline

Learn how planting a tree can provide you benefits as a homeowner and how those benefits extend to your community. A few of the many benefits to be discussed include heating and cooling benefits, property value increases, mental health gains from green landscapes, and more. Learn about tree equity and learn the score of your neighborhood. Join us at Riverside Park in Moline, IL on Sept 17 at 11:30 AM for the program.

Tree Giveaway Homeowners whose property is in a neighborhood with a tree equity score of 80 or less are eligible to receive a tree. A limited number of trees are available, and we will prioritize addresses with the lowest tree equity score. Check your score at go.illinois.edu/TreeScore **Anyone can attend, regardless of their tree equity score.**

Register at go.illinois.edu/TreeWorkshopGiveaway or call the office at (309) 756-9978.

Thanks to Constellation and Mark W. Schwiebert Fund for Environmental Studies grant for their funding of this program.



Tree ID Walk

Sept 23 @ 1 PM | Chippiannock Cemetery Tree Walk

Join Emily Swihart, Extension horticulture educator for a Tree ID Walk at Chippiannock Cemetery, 2901 12th St, Rock Island, IL. You will learn show to identify tree species by their leaves, bark, and shape, explore native and introduced tree species, and discuss best practices for maintaining urban tree health.

Register at go.illinois.edu/TreeWalk



NATIONAL 4-H WEEK

National 4-H Week is October 6-12, 2024

Now is the time to sign up and be part of 4-H for the coming year!

4-H offers a place where kids can belong, lead, learn.

4-H programs challenge youth to “learn by doing” with fun, hands-on activities. Kids can learn, practice, and demonstrate new skills while exploring the interests that are important to them. In 4-H, youth are brought together in clubs led by caring adults who welcome them as a part of the larger 4-H family.

In 4-H, members learn about topics that interest them through projects. That could be anything from learning how to cook, build a robot, or care for the environment. Members can explore these topics through 4-H experiences such as community clubs, special interest clubs, workshops, and more.

4-H members range in age from 8 to 18. Youth ages 5 to 7 may join as a Cloverbud. The cost to join 4-H is just \$20 for the year.

New members can get more information by contacting our 4-H staff in our offices in Milan, Galva and Viola, IL at: go.illinois.edu/4-HLearnByDoing or fill out our new member interest form: go.illinois.edu/4-HNewMemberInterest



Volunteer for 4-H to make sure our local youth have great opportunities to succeed!!

Share your special talents!

Do you have a special talent - fishing, sewing, cooking, crafts, science, robotics- that you would like to share with youth in your community? Sign up to be a 4-H Project or Special Interest Club volunteer to give youth the chance to develop skills in a specific topic area as they complete hands-on projects.

For these and other 4-H Volunteer Opportunities, contact Jennifer Peterson, 4-H Educator at: 217-300-7348
Email: jpetersn@illinois.edu
or fill out this form go.illinois.edu/4-HVolunteerHMRS

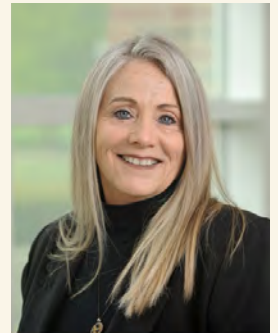
Spectacular September

Explore the awe-inspiring wonders awaiting you this September by visiting the Wonder Series on our Metro 4-H [webpage](#)! August introduced the series by 4-H Educator Elaine Kaple, which taps into the emotion of awe and its benefits for all ages, from fostering happiness and health to deepening connections. In the September issue she talks about how **Immersing in nature—whether it's witnessing seasonal changes or astronomical events—can evoke this profound emotion.** As September unfolds, seize the chance to hike and enjoy the summer's warmth, and don't miss the Super Harvest Moon and partial lunar eclipse on September 17th. This issue also includes hands-on DIY activities inspired by the autumn harvest, featuring apple star stamping and a delicious apple crisp recipe. Explore the issue at go.illinois.edu/SeptemberWonder

4-H Staff Update

Mercer County 4-H Program Coordinator to Retire in September

Please join us in congratulating Tracy Pestle, 4-H Program Coordinator for Mercer County, on her upcoming retirement. After 15 years of dedicated service to Illinois Extension's 4-H program, her last day with us will be Friday, September 6. Tracy is an incredibly hard worker and a real go-getter. She leaves behind a stronger 4-H program in Mercer County, thanks to her determination to introduce new ideas, recruit volunteers for exciting clubs, and enhance the community club program. She will be greatly missed, and we wish her all the best in her retirement!



Rock Island County 4-H welcomes New 4-H Program Coordinator

Melissa “Mel” Fudge has joined the 4-H team as the new program coordinator for Rock Island County. Mel has been a valuable member of our team at Illinois Extension, previously serving as a SNAP-Ed Community Worker before taking on her new role on August 12. Her dedication to direct teaching, organizational excellence, and nurturing the potential in youth has been evident in every task she undertakes. You can contact her at mfudge@illinois.edu or reach her at the Milan Extension office (309) 756-9978.

