



*by Pam Helmlinger, RD, LDN, CDE*

**There may be varying opinions on whether breakfast is the most important meal of the day, but it is wise to time meals throughout the day, starting with a healthy breakfast. It has been shown that those who skip meals tend to make up those missed calories somewhere throughout the day such as in specialty coffee drinks or liquid calories, or they may graze between meals.**

## **WHY IS SKIPPING BREAKFAST BAD?**

Skipping breakfast can lead to several issues when one is trying to lose weight or keep it off. One problem is that after going several hours without eating while sleeping, a lack of food after getting up is likely to have a negative impact on your mood and cause you to feel hungry earlier in the day. This can contribute to food cravings and make you more likely to make higher calorie choices at lunch as a result of hunger.

Eating a healthy breakfast can also help to regulate blood sugar levels through lunch time and therefore, can play

an important role in your mood and thought process. Including protein at breakfast has been shown to reduce hunger throughout the rest of the day. The National Weight Loss Registry shows that of those who have successfully maintained a significant weight-loss for more than five years, 78 percent eat breakfast every day and only 4 percent report never eating breakfast.

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## WHAT IS A HEALTHY BREAKFAST?

What should a healthy breakfast consist of, especially for those who are not hungry when they wake up or need something quick on the way to work? It is a good idea to pair some protein and complex carbohydrates early in the day. While it would be easy to grab a protein bar to eat in the car, a healthy lifestyle change means making real food choices and choosing satisfying protein sources.

**FOR THOSE WHO HAVE HAD BARIATRIC SURGERY, EATING AT LEAST 60-80 GRAMS OF PROTEIN EVERY DAY IS A KEY TO SUCCESS.**

A good breakfast should contribute at least one-third of one's protein requirement for the day. The simplest option to start your day on the way to work is to drink a protein shake, either ready-to-drink or blend-and-go by mixing your favorite protein powder with water and ice, milk of choice, or a non-dairy alternative such as unsweetened almond or coconut milk. Just be sure to measure and track how many calories you are adding to your shake – keep it

simple! If you want to add some extras, try a small handful of berries or some chia seeds for omega 3 fatty-acids and fiber.

Another quick and healthy choice for breakfast is a low-sugar, high protein yogurt such as plain Greek yogurt with fresh fruit. For a hot breakfast, try eggs and fully cooked breakfast chicken sausage links. If you are really short on time in the morning, boiling eggs or preparing them in a muffin pan baked in the oven the night before can save time, or you can make several on the weekends.



Another side that can be cooked in advance is bacon – yet, be mindful to read the label carefully. If you can find it in your local stores, it is healthier to stick with a brand of uncured turkey bacon. It is free of nitrates/nitrites and is lean enough to consider it a protein source versus fat. A typical slice of turkey bacon contains 25 calories and 2 g protein, while the uncured turkey bacon contains 35 calories and 6 g protein (or three times as much). The same holds true for some brands of all-natural, lean chicken sausage with 6 g protein per link, compared to 3-4 grams of protein in turkey sausage links.

The following are a couple of methods for cooking eggs in advance for the week:

- **First, spray your muffin tin with a little oil.**
- **Next, crack your eggs and drop them into the muffin pan tins. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and add any other herbs and spices you wish!**
- **Place into a pre-heated 350 degree oven for 15-20 minutes, depending on how you runny or cooked you prefer your eggs.**
- **Then, let them cool slightly and remove them, using a fork or a spoon.**



## RECIPE – MUFFIN FRITTATAS

### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups chopped vegetables
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 3 cups egg substitute, or 12 large eggs, salt & pepper to taste
- tomato chopped or sliced
- ¼ cup shredded cheese
- non-stick cooking spray

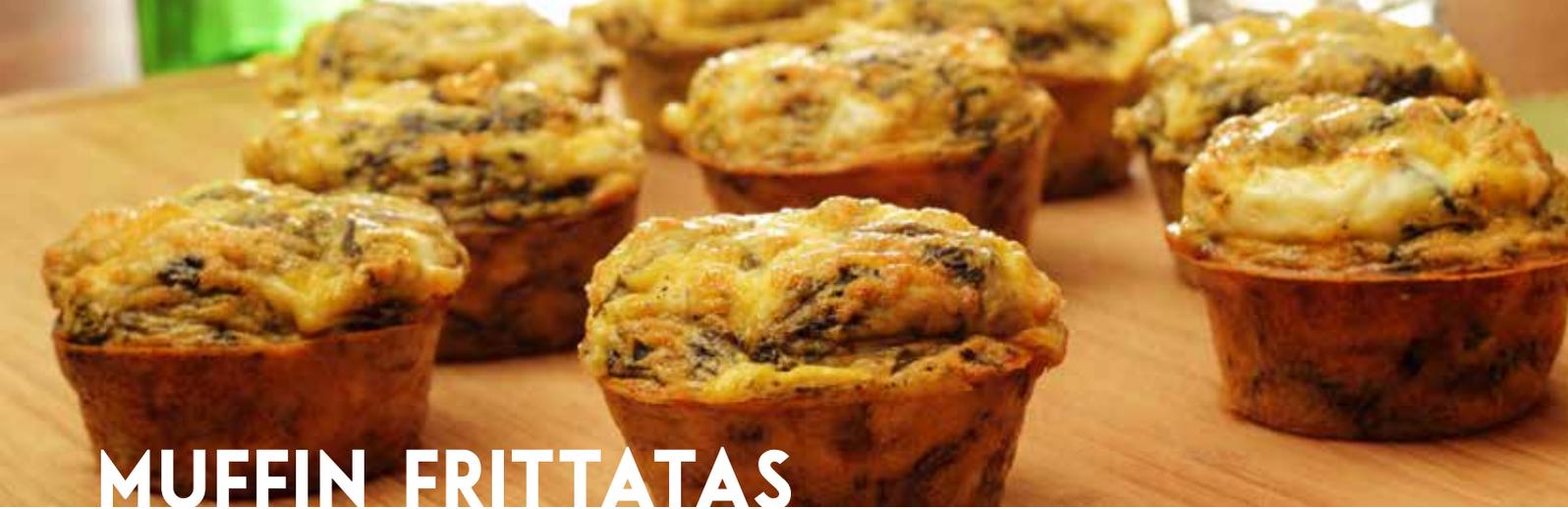
### DIRECTIONS:

- Preheat the oven to 325 degrees & spray a 12-cup muffin pan with non-stick spray. Set aside.
- Chop enough vegetables to equal 2 cups such as onion, bell peppers, and mushrooms. (Other suggestions: broccoli, spinach, zucchini, yellow squash, carrots, and fresh herbs)
- Heat a skillet over medium heat and add the olive oil. Add the vegetable mixture and sauté until vegetables are soft. Divide the mixture among the 12 muffin cups.

- Mix egg substitute, salt, and pepper, and continue whisking. Pour the egg mixture into the muffin pan, filling each cup  $\frac{3}{4}$  full. Bake in 325 degree oven for 25 minutes; frittatas will rise. Remove from oven and set oven to broil. Top each muffin frittata with tomato (sliced or chopped) and a sprinkle of cheese. Place under broiler until cheese melts.
- Let the muffins sit for a few minutes, then remove them from the pan with a fork.
- Variations: For added protein, try adding diced lean meats such as Canadian Bacon, uncured turkey bacon, and lean chicken or turkey sausage.

### NUTRITION FACTS FOR 1 MUFFIN (USING EGG SUBSTITUTE):

- **Calories 50**
- **Carbohydrates 2g**
- **Protein 7g**



# MUFFIN FRITTATAS

## WHAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE?

The bottom line is in order to follow a healthy meal plan, it requires at least some time preparing your meals and planning in advance. So if you are watching your weight, it is recommended that you plan all of your meals, starting with breakfast. Your body will come to expect the first meal of the day and improve your metabolism when you eat consistent meals at approximately the same time each day. Spacing your meals throughout the day and eating quality protein sources will help keep you on the right track!

### *About the Author:*

*Pam Helmlinger, RD, LDN, CDE, is a registered dietitian and diabetes educator at Centennial Center for the Treatment of Obesity. She provides nutrition counseling to pre- and post-op bariatric patients along with a medical weight-loss program. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Dietetics from Harding University in 2001 and has worked with the program since 2006.*

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The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



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## LEARN, CONNECT, ENGAGE

The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

### Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
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  - Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE**



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