



# Make Time for Breakfast Pledge



**"Making time for breakfast is a simple, but very significant step towards good health. It's an easy way to improve your daily diet and to make sure that you get the right nutrition at the start of every day."<sup>1</sup>**

**Judith Liddell,  
Secretary General,  
European Federation  
of the Associations of  
Dietitians (EFAD)**

**B**reakfast is the single most important meal of the day – but all too often gets overlooked in our busy lives.

European families often lead hectic lifestyles with work, commuting, and home commitments leaving precious little time to focus on diet, physical exercise, and the eating habits of the family.

From individual families to society at large, we are beginning to witness the impact of this change. Whilst Europeans are on the whole living longer, non-communicable diseases are rising, and so too are the health inequalities between citizens across the European Union as a whole.

One of the simplest and most cost effective ways of improving health and wellness is ensuring that Europeans have breakfast every day. Besides the influence on daily well-being, research shows that eating breakfast contributes to the quality of the daily dietary intake, balanced metabolism and improved cognitive performance during the daytime, which has both short and long-term beneficial effects to health. Research shows that daily breakfast consumption has important positive associations with healthy lifestyle behaviours, while breakfast skipping has negative associations with unhealthy lifestyle behaviours.<sup>2</sup> Eating breakfast can therefore be a simple way of improving daily nutrition, promoting healthier dietary habits, and taking preventive action against health inequalities.

And yet data coordinated by the World Health Organisation (WHO) shows that breakfast skipping has become increasingly widespread amongst children and adolescents.<sup>3</sup> Only around half of all children eat breakfast regularly in some countries (Austria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Malta, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia), and across Europe as a whole, breakfast skipping is common amongst adolescents, especially girls, older adolescents and those from disadvantaged families.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the obvious health benefits of regularly eating breakfast before work or school, too few European countries actively encourage their citizens to have a morning meal. Indeed, while all EU Member States encourage regular consumption of fruit and vegetables, the message to eat breakfast is only a minor part of some European countries' healthy eating programmes, while many do not mention a healthy morning meal at all.

This is why the members of the 'Breakfast is Best' (BIB) campaign<sup>5</sup> have decided to launch European Breakfast Day, to raise awareness of the benefits of breakfast to people across Europe, also supported at national level.

Together, members of BIB, and a wide range of supporters, are calling on Europe's leaders to put breakfast at the heart of public health promotion campaigns and encourage Europeans to **'Make Time for Breakfast'**, as a significant but achievable step towards achieving healthier lifestyles.



1 EFAD represents the European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians  
2 See Vereecken C. Breakfast consumption and its socio-demographic and lifestyle correlates in schoolchildren in 41 countries participating in the HBSC study Int J. Public Health 54 (2009) S180-S190  
3 Data compiled for the WHO from the Health Behaviour of School Age Children survey – 2006. A new dataset will be published in spring 2012.  
4 See Vereecken C. Breakfast consumption and its socio-demographic and lifestyle correlates in schoolchildren in 41 countries participating in the HBSC study Int J. Public Health 54 (2009) S180-S190  
5 A multi-stakeholder group representing: the European Association of Teachers, the European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians, the Club Européen des Diététiciens de l'Enfance and the European Medical Association, together with the European Breakfast Cereal Association. Breakfast is Best is a science based campaign which promotes the health benefits of eating breakfast.



## Make Time for Breakfast Pledge

Please join us in signing the European Breakfast Pledge. By signing this pledge, you are joining other individuals, non-governmental organisations and stakeholders across Europe in supporting **'Make Time for Breakfast'** and expressing your commitment to help promote the health benefits of breakfast on a local, national and European level.

Our initial target is to collect at least 500 signatures ahead of European Breakfast Day on the 24th April 2012 - to raise awareness of the benefits of breakfast to people across Europe through initiatives in Brussels and elsewhere in the EU.



"Breakfast is the most important meal of the day."

Julie Imperiali,  
personal trainer to  
Nicolas Sarkozy and  
Carla Bruni<sup>6</sup>

In spite of her demanding schedule, German Chancellor, Angela Merkel reportedly makes time to prepare breakfast for her husband every day, recognizing the importance of this meal for health and family.<sup>7</sup>

### > By signing the European Breakfast Pledge, you agree that:

- Breakfast is the most important meal of the day
- You personally aim to **'Make Time for Breakfast'** everyday
- You will aim to be an **Ambassador for Breakfast** at home, in the office, and in the community

### > As an individual, group, or association, you also support the following policy aims at European and National level:

- The long term goal of ensuring that **by 2020 all EU countries include the importance of eating breakfast in their nutrition policies, and monitor breakfast consumption as a key health indicator.**
- Have **'Eat breakfast everyday'** added to standard **nutrition advice**, and include the importance of breakfast in **school curricula**, and **employee health** initiatives.
- Ensure that the **World Health Organisation Europe "Health 2020 strategy"**, and **European Union actions on health inequalities** reflect the importance of eating breakfast to long-term health outcomes.



6 The Independent, 2 February 2010

7 Der Spiegel, 16 December 2011



European  
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of Teachers



Club Européen  
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European Breakfast  
Cereal Association



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