

## **Breakfast Eating Habits among Undergraduate Students of Diet and Nutrition in Lahore**

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### **Abstract**

**OBJECTIVE:** The objective of the study was to find out the breakfast eating habits among undergraduate students of Diet and Nutrition in Lahore, Pakistan.

**METHODOLOGY:** This study was a descriptive survey assessing the breakfast consumption habits of undergraduate female students of the Bachelor's degree in Diet and Nutrition. A total of 100 female students from university of Lahore were sampled using a convenience sample method. Informed consents were taken prior to collection of data. A self-administered questionnaire was developed and used to obtain information. The data was then entered and statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS for window version 16.0.

**RESULTS:** Out of 100 students 46% eat breakfast daily and 54% did not take breakfast on daily basis. 41% of the respondents showed that they give time gap of 5 hours between their breakfast and lunch. Whereas, 32% students said they give 6 hours, 14% responded they give 7 hours and 13% students responded they give 8 hours gap between their breakfast and lunch. In addition, 75% of the respondents said they take snack(s) between breakfast and lunch while 25% said they don't take snack(s) in between.

**CONCLUSION:** More than half of the respondents who are the female student of the Bachelor's degree in diet and nutrition were not taking their breakfast on daily basis. This study gives an interesting insight into the relation between the eating habits and its effects on the health of the students who are currently studying the Diet and Nutrition course and will be certified professionals in coming years.

**Keywords:** Breakfast, Students, snack(s).

### **1 INTRODUCTION:**

Breakfast is often regarded as the most important meal of the day that is the first meal taken before commencement of the daily activities. Splitting the word into two 'Break' and

‘Fast’ may indicate the word ‘Breakfast’ means ‘breaking the fast of the night’ and is considered to provide fuel for the brain and body required after an overnight fast. This vital meal is an important source of energy, nutrients including calcium, iron and vitamins as well as protein and fibre. The research shows that in case the breakfast is missed, it is less likely to be compensated for later in the day.

Due to the tiresome routine of students, it is anticipated that they do not give significance to breakfast especially in the haste or tight schedule in the morning. Such routine may have badly affected their health and performance in studies.

Research shows that the missing breakfast conversely increase the consumption of the snacks or junk food of low nutritional values. A cross-sectional food intake analysis of young adults in Bogalusa has shown that breakfast skipping was associated with substantially lower daily energy intake (Schusdziaer *et al.*, 2011). Several experimental studies have suggested that, in both adults and children, behavior and cognitive performance is improved after consumption of breakfast compared to omission of breakfast (Defeyter MA, Russo R 2013).

## 2 OBJECTIVES:

The objective of the study was to find out the breakfast eating habits among undergraduate students of Diet and Nutrition in Lahore, Pakistan.

## 3 METHODOLOGY:

This study was a descriptive survey assessing the breakfast consumption habits of undergraduate female students of the Bachelor’s degree in Diet and Nutrition. A total of 100 female students from university of Lahore were sampled using a convenience sample method. Informed consents were taken prior to collection of data. A self-administered questionnaire was developed and used to obtain information. The data was then entered and statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS for window version 16.0.

## 4 RESULTS:

**Table 1: Do you eat breakfast daily?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Valid	Yes	46	46.0	46.0	46.0
	NO	54	54.0	54.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The Table 1 shows that majority 54 % of the female respondents reported that they do not eat breakfast on daily basis.

**Table 2: How much time gap do you give between breakfast and lunch**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	5 hours	41	41.0	41.0	41.0
	6 hours	32	32.0	32.0	73.0
	7 hours	14	14.0	14.0	87.0
	8 hours	13	13.0	13.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The results show that 41 % of the respondents reported that there is a gap of five hours between their intake of breakfast and lunch. Whereas 32 %, 14 % and 13 % of the respondents shared that the time gap between breakfast and lunch is six hours, seven hours and eight hours respectively.

**Table 3: Do you eat breakfast daily? \* How much time gap do you give between breakfast and lunch Cross tabulation**

		How much time gap do you give between breakfast and lunch				Total
		5 hours	6 hours	7 hours	8 hours	
Do you eat	Yes	25	15	2	4	46
Breakfast	NO	16	17	12	9	54
daily?						

Total	41	32	14	13	100
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The above table shows cross tabulation of breakfast eating habits of undergraduate female students of Diet and Nutrition and time gap given between their consumption of breakfast and lunch.

**Table 4: Do you take snack(s) between breakfast and lunch?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	75	75.0	75.0	75.0
No	25	25.0	25.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The results showed about 75 % of respondents shared that they consume snacks between the breakfast and lunch.

**Table 5: Do you take snack(s) between breakfast and lunch? \* Do you eat breakfast daily? Cross tabulation**

		Do you eat breakfast daily?		Total
		Yes	NO	
Do you take snack(s) between breakfast and lunch?	Yes	34	41	75
	No	12	13	25
Total		46	54	100

The table shows interesting cross tabulation in breakfast eating habits and consumption of snacks between breakfast and lunch.

## 5 DISCUSSION:

This research was conducted to study the breakfast eating habits among undergraduate students of Diet and Nutrition in Lahore, Pakistan. Breakfast is considered an important source of energy and increase productivity for the following day however; this study

showed that about 54% of the respondents do not take breakfast on daily basis, whereas 46% reported eating daily breakfast. This result may indicate that the students either do not consider daily breakfast as significant or face time constraints to consume breakfast due to the tight schedule to get ready and reach their academic institution on time.

A similar study conducted among undergraduates in university in Kuala, Malaysia showed that some 29 % of the students skip breakfast(Moy F*Met al.*, 2009). Another study conducted by Tanaka et al.,showed that about 35% skipped breakfast(Tanaka M *et al.*, 2008).In addition, a study conducted by Priya et alshowed that about 31 % of adolescents skipped breakfast(Priya RD et al., 2010).Another study showed that 22.7 % of students studying traditional Chinese medicine and Mongolian medicine skipped their breakfast (Sun J et al., 2013).While 44.9% undergraduates of Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta, Nigeria reported skipping of the morning meal (Adesina AE et al., 2013).

The Diet and Nutrition experts advice that breakfast should be consumed within two hours of waking up to help the body fulfil its dietary requirements of energy, nutrients such as calcium, iron, vitamins, protein and fibre for the day.The experts also advice that intake of daily breakfast reduces the risks of high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity and diabetes. Skipping the breakfast, however, may lead to low energy and nutritional deficiency. This habit may indicate higher consumption of snacks or junk food between the breakfast time and lunch time.

This study shows that a high percentage i.e.75 % of the female respondents consume snacks or junk food between the breakfast time and lunch time. Only 25% of the respondents said they do not take snacks or junk food in between two morning meals. The unhealthy dietary trend will not fulfill the body and brain requirements of a balanced nutritional diet which may have negative impact on the concentration level of the students.

This study also reveals that about 41% of the female respondents give time gap of five hours between their breakfast and lunch. Whereas, 32% , 14 % and 13 % of the respondents shared that they give time gap of about six hours, seven hours and eight hours, respectively, between breakfast time and lunch time.

This study suggests the need to understand the importance of eating daily breakfast of the female students who are enrolled in the Diet and Nutrition course and are being trained to be the future professionals.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS:

More than half of the female respondents (56 %) who are students of undergraduate in Diet and Nutrition course were not taking their breakfast on daily basis. This results in to consumption of unhealthy snacks or junk food between the breakfast and lunch time. This study gives an interesting insight into the relation between the eating habits and its effects on the health of the students who are currently studying the Diet and Nutrition course and will be certified professionals in coming years.

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