

## A Descriptive Study on Breakfast Consumption and Skipping Meal Pattern Among Students at Selected Colleges, Coimbatore.

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### Abstract:

Breakfast is an important meal that provides about one-third of daily energy needs. It is the first meal after a long overnight fast. Eating breakfast not only reduces hunger but also boosts health and thinking skills. A study was done to see how often students at a college in Coimbatore eat or skip breakfast. The research used a descriptive, non-experimental method with 254 undergraduate students. These students came from four departments at PPG Group of Institutions: BSc Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, and Allied Health and Science. The questionnaire asked about their background, meal habits, reasons for skipping breakfast, and what they prefer to eat. Results showed that a large number of students often skipped breakfast. Of the 254 students, 144 (about 16.7%) rarely ate breakfast, 45 (17.7%) ate it often, 34 (13.4%) never ate breakfast, and 31 (12.2%) always skipped it.

Although 90.2 percent of participants agreed that breakfast is an essential meal, many still skipped it. The main reasons given were lack of time (56.7%), not liking breakfast foods (22.4%), feeling not hungry in the morning (10.6%), and preferring to eat later in the day (7.9%). This shows that simply raising awareness about the importance of breakfast will not be enough to stop people from skipping it. Participants suggested that developing affordable, convenient foods they can easily access would help them eat breakfast regularly. This approach could improve the nutrition and health of college students.

### Keywords:

*Breakfast, skipping meal, consumption pattern, energy, Health improvement*

### How to Cite this Article?

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**Introduction** Breakfast is the main meal people eat in the morning. It breaks a long overnight fast. Skipping breakfast is like starting a long drive with no fuel. Studies show breakfast can improve students' thinking, focus, and learning. We will look at how it might do this. There is

no strict rule for what an ideal breakfast contains. Generally, it should give about 20 to 25 percent of daily energy and nutrients. Many breakfast foods in Western countries are fortified with vitamins and minerals. This makes it easier to meet daily micronutrient goals. Unfortunately, many students skip breakfast or do not eat enough. Students from poor or disorganized families are especially likely to miss breakfast. Evidence shows breakfast can boost attention, memory, and mental performance. Therefore, eating breakfast is likely to be particularly important. (Alshloul MN Bdair ,2021)

The word “breakfast” combines “break” and “fast.” The “fast” part doesn’t mean to move quickly. Instead, it refers to a period when you don’t eat. To break the fast means to start eating again. The idea is that after a person has gone all night without food, the first meal of the day ends that fasting period. (MansouriM, Hasani-Ranjbar S, 2020).

### **Scope of the study**

A nutritious breakfast provides key nutrients that support children's daily activities and overall health over time. Skipping this meal is linked to health problems and poorer performance in thinking, social skills, and school work. Kids who don't eat breakfast often find it hard to focus in the afternoon and feel more tired because they have less energy late in the day. (MohammedAl Bashtawy, 2017).

Skipping breakfast matches some people's dietary choices and natural hunger rhythms. Some individuals just don’t feel hungry early in the morning or prefer to eat later. For them, breakfast may not be needed or enjoyable. Listening to their bodies allows them to choose when to eat and stay comfortable. Personal tastes influence when people decide to have their meals. For some, skipping breakfast better suits their daily routine and eating style. (Azad Shokri, Omid Sadegi, 2021).

### **Statement of the problem**

A descriptive study on breakfast consumption and skipping meal pattern among college students at selected college, coimbatore.

### **Objectives**

1. To assess the breakfast consumption and impact of skipping meal pattern among college students.

2. To distribute the information booklet on importance of breakfast consumption and impact of skipping meal pattern among college students.

### Operational Definition

- **Breakfast consumption:**

It refers to students are eating food within two hours of waking up. It will be assessed by semi structured questionnaire.

- **Skipping meal pattern:**

It refers to the students doesn't eat one or more of the traditional meals such as breakfast during weekdays.

- **College students:**

First year of PPG Group of Institutions who enrolled in the college.

### Assumption:

Skipping breakfast is related to insulin resistance and weight gain. People who regularly skipped breakfast were about 21% more likely to suffer a cardiovascular disease.

### Data collection procedure

#### Procedure for data collection

After getting approval from the heads of all departments at PPG Group of Institutions, data collection was planned for April 2024. The study lasted one week. During this time, the researcher met first-year students from B.SC Nursing, AHS, BPT, and BOT courses. Quota sampling was used to select the participants. The researcher introduced herself in the classroom and explained the purpose of the study. The main data collection took four days at PPG Group of Institutions in Coimbatore district. She explained the tool to each student after building a good rapport with them individually. Data was gathered through face-to-face interviews to understand students' breakfast skipping habits. Each student was given about 10 minutes to answer the questionnaire. No issues arose during the study, and the students cooperated fully throughout the process.

### Analysis and interpretation

**Simple Percentage Analysis:** The study included 254 students. Most of them, 116 students or 45.7%, were 18 years old. The next largest group, 90 students or 35.4%, were 19 years old. There were 27 students (10.6%) who were 20 years old and 21 students (8.3%) aged 21.

Most students, 176 or 69.3%, were female. The remaining 78 students or 30.7% were male. Most lived in nuclear families, with 208 students or 81.9%. Only 46 students or 18.1% came from joint families.

When looking at family size, 241 students or 94.9% had at least three family members. Only 11 students (4.3%) had two members, and just 2 students (0.8%) lived alone. In terms of residence, 155 students or 61% stayed in hostels. The remaining 99 students or 39% were day scholars. Among the day scholars, 92 students or 66.2% had local guardians. Close relatives cared for 28 students (20.1%), while grandparents watched over 19 students (13.7%). Most fathers, 77 (30.3%), have private jobs. Close behind are 69 (27.1%) in other types of work. Business is the job for 48 fathers, or 18.9%. A small group of 37 (14.6%) have jobs that are not applicable. Only 23 (9.1%) work in government jobs. For mothers, the largest group of 111 (43.7%) marked their occupation as not applicable. Then, 72 (28.4%) are in other jobs. Private employment is listed by 46 mothers, making up 18.1%. Government jobs are held by 16 women, or 6.3%. A few, 9 (3.5%), work in business.

#### **Findings related to meal patterns**

Most students, 205 (80.7%), preferred mixed meals. Non-vegetarian options were chosen by 43 students (16.9%), while 6 students (2.4%) were vegetarian. Among those who liked mixed foods, 156 (61.4%) had it twice a week, 61 (24%) three times, and 37 (14.6%) more often.

For fruit preferences, the majority—224 students (88.2%)—said yes, they liked fruit. Only 30 students (11.8%) said no. The most popular fruit was banana, with 100 students (39.3%) choosing it. Apples were chosen by 40 students (15.7%), guava by 37 (14.5%), pomegranates by 25 (9.8%), mango by 19 (7.4%), grapes by 18 (7%), and oranges by 15 (5.9%).

When asked how often they eat fruit each week, 68 students (26.8%) had fruit once a week. Fifty-four students (21.3%) ate it twice, while 49 students (19.3%) did not eat fruit at all. Thirteen students (18.1%) had fruit three times a week, and 37 (14.6%) ate it daily. Regarding millet consumption, 151 students (59.4%) said yes, they added millet to their food. The remaining 103 students (40.6%) said no. Among the types of millet, 182 students (71.6%) included all types, 70 (27.5%) preferred dhal, 50 (19.6%) green gram, 38 (14.9%) wheat, 22 (8.6%) foxtail millet, 18 (7%) ragi, and 16 (6.2%) did not specify.



### Findings related to reason for skipping meal pattern

Most participants, 144 (56.7%), rarely skipped breakfast. Seventeen point seven percent, or 45 individuals, skipped often. Thirteen point four percent, or 34 people, never skipped, while 12.2%, or 31 participants, always skipped breakfast. The main reason for skipping was lack of time, cited by 56.7% of respondents. About 22.4% didn't like the taste of breakfast foods, and 10.6% were not hungry in the morning. Some preferred to eat later in the day, accounting for 7.9%, and a small number, 2.4%, did not answer about the importance of breakfast.

Most believe skipping breakfast impacts health negatively; 229 (90.2%) agreed, while only 25 (9.8%) disagreed. When asked about the time spent eating breakfast, nearly half, 48.2%, spent 5 to 10 minutes. Thirty percent, or 78 people, took 10 to 15 minutes. Less than five minutes was reported by 12.2%, or 31 individuals. Around 7.1% spent 15 to 30 minutes, and only 1.6% took over 30 minutes.

Regarding breakfast's importance, most, 77%, considered it very important. 18.5% saw it as important, while 3.5% thought it was somewhat important. Only a small fraction, 0.4%, viewed breakfast as not important.

Looking at productivity, 56.7% felt less productive when skipping breakfast. About 24.4% saw no change in productivity, and 18.9% felt more productive. The main reason for skipping was a busy morning routine, cited by 35.8%. Some didn't like the taste of breakfast foods, while 22% lacked appetite in the morning. A smaller group, 7.1%, ran out of breakfast food or couldn't cook. Others skipped for dieting reasons, and a tiny portion had no reason at all. Most believed skipping breakfast affected their energy levels; 78.3% said it did, 6.3% disagreed, and 15.4% were unsure.

### Conclusion

A pattern of skipping breakfast was observed among college students. The study shows that students who skip breakfast tend to be taller than those who eat it every day. We provided a pamphlet explaining the effects of missing breakfast. Health education sessions were also conducted to inform students about healthy habits. Additionally, we designed a schedule with the best breakfast routines to promote student wellness.

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