

Healthy breakfast is the best way to start the day

Bring your mask back out; infection rate is rising in our community. Vaccination is still the best insurance against severe illness. Eat and drink healthy foods to lower your risk.

Q So, is breakfast actually the most important meal of the day? I have been fasting until noon. FK, Winterville

A Why are you fasting until noon? I can get pretty emotional about this topic so instead of me preaching, Melisa Pasli, a third-year Brody medical student will give you some advice. Here is what she says:

Who doesn't love waking up to the smell of scrambled eggs, bacon, and pancakes (whole-grain of course)? Starting your day off with a yummy, filling breakfast is always a good idea. You may think skipping a meal may lead to eating less overall because you have a shorter window to eat. Studies actually show that most people will eat more. It makes sense that you will be way hungrier by lunch time, so your chances of making healthy, nutritious choices greatly diminish. You might eat the first thing you set your "hangry" eyes on ("hangry" — a way to describe hungry and angry). If I don't eat for 12 hours,



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and I have to decide between a healthy salad and juicy burger, I'm picking the burger, which is not the best choice.

Fasting is so popular that some people are using fasting apps to tell them when it's OK to eat instead of learning to use their own hunger cues. Some researchers are questioning if the increase in skipping breakfast contributes to the rise in obesity.

Overall, the choices we make in the morning really do dictate our meal choices throughout the entire day. It's been shown scientifically. Yes, eating a healthy breakfast equals lower risk of developing diabetes and heart disease. This is true for kids and adults.

So if your kid is not eating breakfast, you may want to help him or her develop the healthy habit. It will pay off in school, too. Kids who eat breakfast tend to pay attention better and that equals learning better.

That's why the school breakfast program was created — to ensure kids have access to healthy foods before they get to "work." You have heard the



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saying, "we are what eat" and there is truth to it.

Okay, so now the question is: What should we eat? Although hash browns and pancakes at Mickey D's might sound like a good idea, avoid heavily processed foods. Eating a high-protein, high-fiber breakfast seems to be the way to go.

Make sure the meals you pick are high-quality and loaded with nutrients and vitamins. These include meals such as scrambled eggs (be sure to add more egg whites than egg yolks for the protein), yogurt (Greek has more protein) with berries, and

whole-wheat toast with peanut butter with little added sugar, or smashed avocado on top.

Avocado does contain fat but your body needs some fat, and avocado fat is good fat. Eating avocados does not raise your LDL-cholesterol and, importantly, avocados provide vitamin C, folate, and magnesium.

Check out the breakfast recipes at Myplate.gov. You can tailor your healthy breakfast needs using different filters such as "limit saturated fat," providing you with yummy food options that match your health goals.

Find the breakfast foods that

work for you. Oatmeal is most definitely a healthy option, but one study showed that it might not keep you feeling as full as having eggs. Bacon is a popular breakfast food, but alternatives like turkey bacon are just as high in sodium and may have other additives that you don't want.

Experiment to see if high fiber or high protein keeps you feeling fuller longer.

Some people complain of nausea when eating early in the day. If this is the case for you, don't totally skip the meal but start off with a light snack, such as Greek yogurt and low-sugar granola, until your body adjusts to the time frame. Pretty soon, you'll notice your tummy rumbling the minute you wake up and happy to enjoy a great meal at the start of the day.

If you need help planning a healthy meal plan, visit with a registered dietitian nutritionist. We also recommend that you re-set that fasting app so it will ring within an hour of waking up for your day.

Professor emeritus Kathy Kolasa, a registered dietitian nutritionist and Ph.D., is an affiliate professor in the Brody School of Medicine at ECU. Contact her at kolasaka@ecu.edu.

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Blu Farm to Table set to open in Washington, N.C., in August

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Hot Dish Writer

Last week, I was craving a healthy summer meal, so I made a tomato sandwich on white bread with Miracle Whip, salt and pepper, paired it with a glass of sweet iced tea and a steamed ear of fresh corn slathered in dairy-free butter and sugar.

It was transformative, not just because it tasted like heaven, but because it reminded me of my childhood and it connected me to the land. Eating fresh produce that a hard-working farmer planted and harvested helped me to step back in time for a few minutes to my family table.

Most of us are seeking this type of dining experience called farm-to-table in which we taste beyond the plate where food transports not only our taste buds but our memories.

Healthy, fresh colorful vegetables, berries, meats and fish harvested or caught by our neighbors just makes the connection to the way things taste deeper, richer and more meaningful.

I'm excited this week to introduce a brand-new restaurant that will open in Washington, N.C., in just a few weeks. Blu Farm to Table, located at 129 E. Main St., is more than just a meal. Blu is a farm-to-table dining experience offering eclectic, seasonal, globally inspired menus, driven by a commitment to serving local, sustainable and responsibly-sourced ingredients.

The team behind Blu Farm to Table is owner and operator Vickie Desourdy, executive chef Everett Garner, and customer relations manager Alexis Hood.

The restaurant Blu Farm to Table is the final piece to the Lane Blu brand connecting Style + Decor + Dining. Desourdy opened the first part of her dream two years ago. She always wanted the restaurant to open first, but COVID got in the way. She focused her efforts on the first two pieces instead.

Lane Blu features high-end kitchen appliances and cookware, olive oils and vinegars,



CHRISTINA RUOTOLO/THE DAILY REFLECTOR

A seared butler steak is served with blackberry Romesco over Pommes Puree (creamy potatoes) with grilled summer squash and topped with frizzled carrots.

cooking products as well as seasonal gifts. It also offers in-home cooking classes to small groups.

Next door to that is Lane Blu Boutique, featuring one-of-a-kind furniture pieces and textiles. The Blu Farm to Table dining experience is the final puzzle piece and a natural extension of the Lane Blu brand.

The restaurant will offer an extensive array of gluten- and dairy-free offerings, rooftop dining overlooking the Pamlico River, memorable craft-made cocktails, and a globally inspired menu sourced almost exclusively from the fields and waters of eastern North Carolina.

When Desourdy opened Lane Blu over two years ago, she wanted it to be Washington's resource for what's on the cusp of trending, using her unique style influenced by her travels. While serving in the military, she saw trauma patients who had specific dietary needs similar to hers. She is dairy and gluten intolerant.

She teamed up with executive chef Everett Garner to deliver a dining experience that hon-

ors eastern North Carolina's agrarian traditions, showcases the vast and plentiful bounty of our land, rivers and sea, and celebrates progress towards a sustainable food system that will allow future generations to continue enjoying the fresh, clean and healthy food grown, raised and caught right here at home.

Blu Farm to Table has also partnered with local growers to provide the freshest ingredients. Because the restaurant offers everything fresh and home-grown, the menu will change, sometimes weekly and seasonally. This allows diners to eat the freshest meal possible.

I was lucky to get a first taste of the charming menu inspired by summer's bounty, starting with a Peach Mojito made with muddled peaches and mint, peach balsamic, fresh lime, simple syrup, prosecco, rum and topped with a grilled peach slice. It was like biting into a fresh peach with various textures from the smooth, yet pulpy peach puree to the spices from the rum that warm the throat on the way down.

The next cocktail was the Blackberry Basil Margarita made with muddled blackberry and basil, freshly squeezed sour mix, tequila with a cane sugar and spiced tea rim. It tasted vibrant and tart with floral notes throughout. For those who don't want alcohol, the restaurant offers signature blueberry and hibiscus iced tea.

For my appetizer, I tried the charred corn and roasted peach gazpacho which celebrates the flavors of summer made with sweet corn. Gazpacho is a cold soup made from raw, blended vegetables. It was fresh and creamy with hints of sweetness throughout and it cooled the palate.

Next, I tried two of Blu Farm to Table's entrees. The first was a seared butler steak with blackberry Romesco over Pommes Puree (creamy potatoes) with grilled summer squash and topped with frizzled carrots. This was a colorful tribute to a farm in summer and had a rustic homesteader feel.

The steak was fork tender, juicy and succulent. The sweet blackberry sauce offered a hint



of tartness mixed with creamy potatoes and woody carrots. The flavors evolve and harmonize on the tongue.

Next, I tried the pan seared cobia topped with cucumber and tomato relish, pecan pesto, sweet corn marscapone Risotto and a roasted okra crisp. This dish celebrates the sea with a flaky, meaty, tender and clean cobia fillet caught earlier that day.

It pairs beautifully with fresh salsa, hints of herb and spice from the pecan pesto and warm summer rings of buttery squash. The okra was sweet and the Risotto was velvety, as well as tangy from the marscapone. It was a delight for the summer senses.

To end my tasting, I sampled the mixed berry trifle which is both a gluten-free and dairy-free dish featuring a pound cake made from Desourdy's grandmother's recipe. Top it with a coconut cream whipped cream and fresh blackberries and blueberries. It was sweet, creamy and a nod to summer sunsets. Blackberry, blueberry and lemon are always a match made in heaven.

My journey was truly a farm-to-table experience that connects you to food and the community all in one trip.

Now remember, Blu Farm to Table doesn't open until the beginning of August. Reservations are preferred so make sure to make a reservation for dinner, or stop by for lunch. Closed on Tuesdays, the restaurant will be open from 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Mondays as well as Wednesdays through Saturdays and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for Sunday brunch. To make a reservation, call 917-334-5107 or visit the website, www.blufarmtotable.com.



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