

Breakfast on the run

It's no bad thing to leave the day's first meal until you're checking your emails at work.

Eating breakfast at the table might be normal on TV but many real-life breakfasts are eaten at desks or on the run. This may not be perfect but it's not bad, either – it's what you eat for breakfast that matters more than where you eat it.

Taking breakfast to work makes perfect sense if your hunger signals kick in later in the morning – a common reason for skipping this meal, says accredited practising dietitian Sue Radd.

"Having breakfast doesn't have to be the first thing you do when you open your eyes," she says. "Some people don't feel like eating until 9am or they might leave for work at 6.30am and aren't hungry at that time. Eating breakfast at work while you read emails can take some of the pressure off, especially if you're a parent who has to look after everyone else first thing in the morning."

Like many issues with healthy eating, the secret of good portable breakfasts is planning – as opposed to grabbing a 2000-kilojoule muffin when hunger pangs eventually kick in. You don't have to be a *MasterChef* winner to mix some good muesli with low-fat yoghurt and maybe some chopped apple or berries in a container the night before to take to work the next day. Or to have a supply of dense, grainy rolls in the freezer that can form the basis of an eat-at-your-desk breakfast – just spread with ricotta and eat with fruit.

If your workplace runs to a kitchen with a fridge and microwave, you can stash the makings of breakfast at work or even start the day with porridge.

It's hard to beat either traditional rolled oats or a mix of traditional oats and barley – a

breakfast aisle newcomer from Goodness Superfoods. Combining barley with traditional oats delivers a hefty hit of fibre – almost eight grams per 40 grams – which gets you well on your way to your daily fibre target of about 30 grams. Both traditional oats or the oats-barley mix give a healthy dose of low GI, slow-release carbohydrates that help to keep you feeling full, Radd says.

"A breakfast like this is more satisfying than a toasted white-bread sandwich or a bowl of Rice Bubbles. You feel better throughout the morning and it helps you get to lunch without needing more than an apple," she says.

Some cereal companies have also introduced packs with single-serve pouches of microwaveable quick oats with extras such as seeds and dried fruit. These are OK, although not as low GI as traditional oats, Radd says. She thinks it's just as easy to keep a pack of traditional oats at work, with a jar of seeds or dried fruit to mix in. It's also much cheaper: \$1.20 for a 900-gram pack of home-brand oats gives you 18 or more breakfasts – and less packaging to toss out.

But if microwaving breakfast isn't an option, there are other portable possibilities – just remember that the components of a sustaining, waistline-friendly breakfast are whole grains, preferably low GI, plus some form of protein, which could be low-fat yoghurt or ricotta or a nut butter, such as the usual peanut or cashew, almond and brazil (or a mix of all three).

You could take a small carton of yoghurt to eat with fruit and grainy bread, for instance,



or spread a wholegrain roll with nut butter and wrap it around a banana like a hot dog, Radd says.

"These are better options than relying on muesli bars, which are only a small and relatively expensive source of whole grains and not especially filling," she says.

"They can also be sickly sweet – and breakfast shouldn't taste like dessert."

Paula Goodyer blogs at smh.com.au/chewonthis

Fact file ...

- If you're having breakfast at work, plan ahead by preparing muesli with low-fat yoghurt or dense, grainy rolls.
- Whole grains, preferably low GI, and protein are an ideal start to the day.
- Remember: breakfast should not taste like dessert.