

[IMAGE]

## Be Good to Your Heart With a Healthy Start

You've heard that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, but if it consists of fast food - things like egg-and-sausage muffin sandwiches and hash browns - you should seriously reconsider your food choices, according to a recent study.

Researchers analyzed the blood of nine healthy adults who each consumed a breakfast consisting of an egg muffin, sausage muffin and two hash browns - a meal consisting of 910 calories, 81 grams of carbohydrates, 51 grams of fat and 32 grams of protein. The meal increased inflammatory components in the bloodstream, which stayed elevated for up to four hours.

"People who experience repeated short-lived bouts of inflammation resulting from many such unhealthy meals can end up with blood vessels in a chronic state of inflammation, a primary factor in the development of atherosclerosis," commented Ahmad Alijada, PhD, one of the researchers. Atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries) is one of the leading causes of heart attack and stroke.

While it is still true that a healthy breakfast can jump start your day, your food choices make all the difference. Give your heart a break! Replace fast food with fresh fruit and low-fat yogurt, a bran muffin, or whole-grain cereal or toast.

### *Reference:*

Aljada A, Mohanty P, Ghanim H, Abdo T, et al. Increase in intranuclear nuclear factor kB and decrease in inhibitor kB in mononuclear cells after a mixed meal: evidence for a proinflammatory effect. *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 2004;79(4):682-90.

Warner, J. Food breakfast triggers inflammation. [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com). April 19, 2004.

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