

## FROM THE YOUNG LAWYERS COMMITTEE

### Ideal Meal Times

By Sam Heaney

As young attorneys, we have tons on our plate (no pun intended). Whether it is drafting a brief by an upcoming deadline, dropping off or picking our children up from school, or attending various networking activities, it can be difficult to concentrate on . . . ourselves. This can often lead to us putting our diets and any concerns about our nutrition intake on the mental back burner.

This article highlights not so much what we should eat but *when* we should eat, in an effort to keep our bodies and health in good shape.

#### Breakfast to Begin the Day

Eat consistently! That is what Audra Wilson, RD, LDN, a dietitian at Northwestern Medicine stresses. *See generally* Audra Wilson, *The Best Times to Eat*, Northwestern Medicine, <https://www.nm.org/healthbeat/healthy-tips/nutrition/best-times-to-eat> (last visited Sept. 13, 2021). Wilson suggests eating breakfast within an hour of waking up. *Id.* By eating within that first hour of the day, we program our bodies to expect breakfast—the meal that provides us the necessary energy to begin our days—while also preventing breakfast from morphing into a mid-morning snack. *Id.*

Eating breakfast does wonders. While it may be tempting to skip it, especially because time is running short, try your best to eat something! Even if it is grabbing an apple or banana on the run, that will prepare you well for the rest of your day.

#### Consistent Lunch

Lunch is always welcomed, as it is so nice to break up our days while also getting to eat. We need lunch to keep our energy levels up as we continue to grind at work. By not eating lunch, some of us can become hungry. (Hand up!) Wilson states that lunch should be eaten roughly four to five hours after breakfast. *Id.* If that is not possible, and lunch gets pushed off until six or seven hours after breakfast, then you should consider eating a snack in between breakfast and dinner. *Id.* As far as *what* to eat, Wilson suggests eating a mix of protein and carbohydrates, such as a low-fat cheese stick with an apple. *Id.*

By consistently eating lunch four to five hours after breakfast, our bodies become programmed to eat then, which can cut down on unnecessary snacking.

## Eat a Heavy Dinner?

No! Do not do that. Dinner should, in theory, follow the same schedule, being eaten approximately four to five hours after lunch. *Id.* From a practical standpoint, this is often not possible, so a light snack may be needed between lunch and dinner. Another snack suggestion from Wilson is to eat vegetables with one-fourth cup of hummus. *Id.* Whatever the snack may be, try to avoid eating chips, sweets, and the like.

While dinner is often the meal that is not overlooked or skipped, what is consumed after dinner also is important. While Wilson does not discuss dessert, we are often told not to include it in our diets. However, if you can eat some dessert within reason and not overindulge, go for it! Just try not to eat dessert too close to bedtime or late in the evening.

Programming our bodies to eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner at approximately the same times each day, to the extent possible, can develop a schedule that cuts out unnecessary snacks and unhealthy habits. At the same time, enjoy the meals you eat! Try not to rush when you are eating, as slowing down and focusing on the foods helps you digest your food better. *Id.* This is sometimes easier said than done, but it is possible!



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