INTRODUCING A CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST AND ITS EFFECT ON DAILY NUTRIENT INTAKE OF OBSTETRIC IN-PATIENTS

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A continental breakfast consisting of juice, stewed fruit, cereal (including porridge), toast and spreads and a beverage was trialed in two obstetric wards at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney. The object of the trial was to determine if the continental breakfast supplied less energy and nutrients than the traditional hospital breakfast that offered a hot item (usually an egg dish) and hence placed patients with increased energy demands at nutritional risk.

A sample of 32 nursing mothers on full or soft diets was used in the study. A control group of 15 were offered a hot breakfast consisting of orange juice, stewed fruit, cereal, toast and spreads, a hot meal item and a beverage. A trial group of 17 women were recruited from the same wards while the continental breakfast was trialed. Three day weighed records of food intake were kept for every patient and the nutrient intake determined by computer analysis using the NUTTAB 90 database. Comparison of the average nutrient intakes at breakfast (see table) showed that protein, cholesterol and monounsaturated fats were significantly higher for the control group than the trial group. However overall daily intakes showed no significant differences excepting a higher cholesterol intake in the control group.

	Breakfast intake		Daily intake	
	Control	Trial	Control	Trial
energy (kJ)	2053	1909	8071	8328
protein (g)	20	12.9*	96	93
fat (g)	17.6	13.6	76	74
carbohydrate (g)	64	71	220	245
fibre (g)	6.1	5.8	21	23
sodium (mg)	672	531	2742	2783
saturated fat (g)	8.0	5.9	34	29
monounsaturated fat (g)	5.5	3.9*	24	23
polyunsaturated fat (g)	2.3	2.8	9.4	12.1
cholesterol (mg)	180	27*	451	295**

* $P<0.05$ ** $P<0.01$ Significance determined using students t-test.

While the study found that these patients were not nutritionally disadvantaged by the continental breakfast, there was no evidence that the change had any positive impact on their daily intake in terms of reduced total fat or sodium, or increased dietary intakes.

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