

BREAKFAST CEREALS – CATEGORY NUTRITIONAL PROFILE GRAINS & LEGUMES NUTRITION COUNCIL CATEGORY AUDIT 2016

Breakfast cereal is a popular way for Australians to start the day.^{1,2} It's affordable, quick and nutritious.³⁻⁵

Research shows people who regularly eat breakfast cereal are more likely to have a healthier diet, to weigh less, and are less likely to develop cardiovascular disease or diabetes.⁵

In fact, breakfast cereals provide 17.6% iron, 18.7% thiamin, 13.0% folate, 12.6% riboflavin and 10.6% of dietary fibre intakes for Australians aged 2 years and over. In addition, they contribute very little towards kilojoules (energy 4.6%), total sugars (3.4%), sodium (around 2%) and fat (2.2%) intakes.

Australian breakfast cereal manufacturers are continually investing in product development and innovation to better meet the lifestyle needs and preferences of consumers. As such the category is constantly evolving.

To better understand how the breakfast cereal aisle has changed and to have an accurate snapshot of its current nutritional profile, ABCMF approached the Grains and Legumes Nutrition Council (GLNC) to share their breakfast cereal category data and to undertake an additional analysis of the category.⁶

METHOD

As part of the 2015 GLNC grain and legumes food product audit, GLNC examined the nutritional profile of 420 breakfast cereals found in four different retail supermarkets in the North Sydney/Cremorne area of Sydney⁶. The review used on pack information, including nutrition information, claims, logo and ingredients to determine content of fibre, protein, saturated fat, sodium, sugars and whole grains per serve and per 100g.

The comprehensive analysis of the Australian breakfast cereal category included all 420 products found at these supermarkets, comprising:

- ready-to-eat cereals (n = 165)
- muesli (including granola and oat based cluster products) (n = 182)
- hot cereals such as oats (n = 73)

RESULTS

Health Star Ratings

- 50% of breakfast cereals (212 products) carried the Health Star Rating on front of pack
- Of these 212 products, the majority (82% or 174 products) were rated 4-5 stars and almost all (93% or 198 products) were rated at least 3 stars.
- Only 14 products rated 2-2.5 stars and no products were identified that rated less than 2 stars.

FACT SHEET



Dietary fibre

- The majority (88% or 370 products) of breakfast cereals were classified as either a source, good source or excellent source of fibre according to Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) criteria ($\geq 2\text{g/serve}$, $\geq 4\text{g/serve}$ or $\geq 7\text{g/serve}$ respectively).^{6,7}
- Almost all mueslis (95%) and hot cereals (97%) and three quarters (76%) of ready-to-eat cereals (RTECs) were classified as a source, good source or excellent source of fibre according to FSANZ criteria ($\geq 2\text{g/serve}$, $\geq 4\text{g/serve}$ or $\geq 7\text{g/serve}$ respectively).^{6,7}
- Almost half of all breakfast cereals (45% or 187 products) were good or excellent sources of fibre, according to FSANZ criteria ($\geq 4\text{g/serve}$ or $\geq 7\text{g/serve}$).^{6,7}

*N.B. Fibre information was not declared on the nutrition information panel for 5% of products audited. The above messages reflect the total breakfast cereals audited.*⁶

Protein

- 35% (or 148 products) provided a source of protein, according to FSANZ criteria ($\geq 5\text{g/serve}$).^{6,7}
- One in two (52%) mueslis provided a source of protein, according to FSANZ criteria ($\geq 5\text{g/serve}$), as well as 26% of hot cereals and 21% of RTECs.^{6,7}

Saturated fat

- More than half of breakfast cereals (54% or 227 products) were low in saturated fat according to FSANZ criteria ($< 1.5\text{g/100g}$).^{6,7}
- Most RTECs (85% or 141 products) were low in saturated fat.⁶

Sodium

- The majority (95% or 401 products) of breakfast cereals contained $< 400\text{mg/100g}$ sodium – the benchmark used by the Australian Government in setting reformulation targets as part of the Food and Health Dialogue.^{6,8}
- Across the category nearly two thirds (61% or 256 products) of breakfast cereals were low in sodium, according to FSANZ criteria ($\leq 120\text{mg/100g}$).^{6,7}
- Almost all RTECs (93% or 154 products) contained $< 400\text{mg/100g}$ sodium.⁶
- For RTECs, 25% or 42 products were low in sodium, according to FSANZ criteria ($< 120\text{mg/100g}$).^{6,7}
- On average, a 40g serve of RTEC contained 95mg sodium (238mg/100g serve).⁶

Total sugars

Naturally occurring in ingredients, such as fruit, plus added sugars

- Half of all breakfast cereals (51%) and three quarters (77%) of mueslis contained fruit, which is a significant contributor to total sugars.⁶ Note: ABCMF Manufacturers report that fruit may contribute around half of the total sugars in breakfast cereals containing fruit.

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- The majority (63%) of breakfast cereals contained less than 20g of total sugars per 100g. That equates to 264 products with less than 8g total sugars (less than 2 teaspoons) per 40g serve.⁶
- 15% of all breakfast cereals were low in sugar according to FSANZ criteria (<5g/100g). That equates to 64 products with less than 2g of total sugars (less than half a teaspoon) per 40g serve. For hot cereals, 51% were low in sugar. ^{6,7}
- For RTECs, 53% contained 20g or less of total sugars per 100g. That equates to 87 products with less than 8g total sugars (2 teaspoons or less) per 40g serve. ⁶
- On average a 40g serve of RTEC contained 7.4g of total sugars (18.6g/100g).⁶ For comparison, this is similar to a half a cup of milk, half to one piece of fruit or a quarter to half a cup of juice.

Whole grains

- At least 69% (288 products) of all breakfast cereals could be classified as either containing whole grains, high in whole grains or very high in whole grains according to the GLNC Code of Practice for Whole Grain Ingredient Content Claims.⁶
- For RTECs, at least 65% (108 products) could be classified as either containing whole grains, high in whole grains or very high in whole grains according to the GLNC Code of Practice for Whole Grain Ingredient Content Claims. For hot cereal this was 97% of products and for muesli 60%.⁶
- Wholegrain content was not available on pack for 22% of products (13% RTECs, 37% mueslis and 1% of hot cereals), so they could not be included in this analysis and were not considered as being a source of whole grains.

OBSERVATIONS

In preparing the analysis, GLNC made the following observations:

- Nutrient content reported per serve is affected by the range of serving sizes.
- Results are based on the information displayed in the Nutrition Information Panel in whole number (i.e. when SFAT was listed as <1, this was not included in the analysis).
- Fibre content was not provided for 5% of total breakfast cereals audited.
- Wholegrain content was not available for 13% RTECs, 37% mueslis and 1% of hot cereals.
- Miscellaneous products (e.g. wheat bran, wheat germ, oat bran) were not included.
- Seven products (3 muesli products and 4 hot cereal products) only provided nutrition content information as prepared with added water. These products nutritional information was excluded from per 100g nutrition analysis, however they were included in the claim eligibility analysis given this on pack nutrition information determines claim eligibility.

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ⁱ Sodium: The data for sodium overestimates the proportion of sodium intake contributed by specific food groups. This is because the AHS data only includes sodium naturally present in foods as well sodium added during processing; it does not include salt added in home prepared foods or at the table and an estimated 64% of Australians report that they add salt at home either during meal preparation or at the table.