

ABS DATA: ADDED SUGAR INTAKES LOWEST AMONG CEREAL EATERS

8 August 2017: Breakfast cereal eaters had lower added sugar intakes than people who skipped breakfast or chose other breakfast foods, according to a new analysis of ABS data.¹

The analysis of the 2011-13 ABS Australian Health Survey data, by Nutrition Research Australia, is the first to examine the role of breakfast cereals in added sugars intakes of Australian children and adults.

It revealed:

- Adults who ate breakfast cereal had the lowest daily intake of added sugars – 10 per cent lower than those who ate other foods for breakfast and 26 per cent lower than breakfast skippers;
- For children, there was no difference in daily intakes of added sugars between those who ate cereal, had other breakfast foods or those who skipped breakfast; and
- Added sugars from breakfast cereal accounted for less than one per cent of the daily energy intakes in the diets of children (0.8%) and of adults (0.7%) who ate cereal.

Nutrition Research Australia Director and lead researcher Dr Flavia Fayet-Moore said the results were consistent with what we know about Australian dietary habits.

“Our previous analysis of the 2011-13 Australian Health Survey² showed that the majority of adults and children ate breakfast cereals low in total sugars, and on average, only added a small amount of sugar to their cereal bowl,” said Dr Fayet-Moore.

Our new findings show that breakfast cereals contributed little to the daily added sugars intake of Australians. Breakfast cereals contributed 4g or less of added sugars a day in the diets of adults and children who ate them.

“These are important findings as they help to provide a clearer picture about the contribution of breakfast cereal to added sugars in Australian diets.

“This work builds on our original ABS analysis that showed that breakfast cereal eaters had a more nutritious diet and were more likely to reach their nutrient targets despite having a similar total energy intake to people who skipped breakfast or ate other breakfast foods. Adult cereal eaters were also slimmer and had a smaller waist circumference.”²

Using ABS data from the first day of dietary recall of 12,153 individuals, Nutrition Research Australia classified participants into three groups: breakfast skippers, breakfast cereal consumers, and non-cereal breakfast consumers. Daily added sugars were calculated for all respondents by absolute amount (grams) and proportion of daily energy.

Dietitians Association of Australia spokesperson and Accredited Practising Dietitian Joel Feren said breakfast cereals were a smart choice for breakfast and should be encouraged.

“Australians shouldn’t let myths about sugars turn them away from nutrient-rich core grain foods like breakfast cereals,” said Mr Feren.

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“Breakfast cereal eaters have healthier diets and are more likely to meet their nutrition needs. And eating breakfast cereal regularly is linked with a healthier weight and less risk of disease.

“Breakfast cereal also provides essential cereal fibre, which is not the same as the fibre you get from fruit and vegetables.”

There is also new data on the nutritional quality of Australian breakfast cereals with Grains & Legumes Nutrition Council (GLNC) releasing the findings of its 2016 category audit³.

“Year on year we are seeing the breakfast cereal category grow and evolve to meet consumer demand. There are now more than 468 breakfast cereals for Australians to choose from with 85 per cent being a source of fibre and half (56%) being high in wholegrains, “ said Dr Sara Grafenauer, GLNC General Manager.

The GLNC audit also reported 96% of the category meets the Australian government’s benchmark for sodium set at 400mg per 100g or less, and the majority of breakfast cereals in Australia (68%) have 20g or less of total sugars per 100g (including sugars from fruit).

A summary report, including the latest GLNC audit and added sugar findings from the Nutrition Research Australia analysis, is available at <http://bit.ly/BfastCerealDataReport>. Nutrition Research Australia’s analysis was funded by a research grant from the Australian Breakfast Cereal Manufacturers Forum (ABCMF).

-ENDS-

Research definitions:

Total sugars: includes naturally occurring sugars (i.e. from fruit and milk) and added sugars.

Added sugars: the Food Standards Australia New Zealand definition for added sugars was used by the ABS and includes sugars, sugar syrups and fruit syrups, which may be added during the manufacturing of foods or added by the consumer in the preparation of food and beverages.

For all media enquiries please contact: Bite Communications on 02 9977 8195 or Sonya Rogers on 0435 110 670

References:

1. Nutrition Research Australia. Breakfast Choice and its impact on added and free sugars intake: A secondary analysis of the 2011-12 National Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey. Sydney, December 2016.
2. Nutrition Research Australia, Breakfast and Breakfast Cereal Consumption Among Australians – A secondary analysis of the 2011-12 National Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey, Sydney, February 2016
3. Grains & Legumes Nutrition Council. 2016 Breakfast Cereal Audit. Unpublished: 2016.

The Australian Breakfast Cereal Manufacturers Forum (ABCMF) is a forum of local breakfast cereal manufacturers committed to providing up-to-date, evidence-based information on the Australian breakfast cereal category. For further information visit cereal4brekkie.org.au