

# A healthy brekky is as easy as

**Peel** a banana **Pour** milk on cereal  
**Pop** grainy bread in the toaster



## Choosing a healthy breakfast cereal

### The importance of a healthy breakfast

The OPAL healthy breakfast theme focuses on encouraging children, young people and families to choose a nutritious breakfast everyday. A healthy breakfast provides a great start to the morning and helps kids' learning and concentration during the day. It also provides plenty of the vitamins and minerals our kids need for a healthy body.

With the wide range of cereals around and all the clever marketing, choosing cereals can be confusing. Use the following step by step guide to help you make good choices.

### Step 1: Consider the nutrition information panel

The Nutrition Information Panel on packaged foods shows the energy, fat, protein, carbohydrate, sugar, sodium (salt) and sometimes fibre content of the food.

Breakfast cereals can be compared by looking at the amounts of these nutrients shown in the per 100g column to identify the healthier choices. The healthiest breakfast cereals will fit within these guidelines\* (all per 100g).

### Nutrition Information Panel e.g. Wheat biscuits

	Per Serve (33g)	Per 100g
Energy	492 kJ	1490 kJ
	118 Cal	356 Cal
Protein	4.1g	12.4g
<b>Fat – Total</b>	0.5g	1.4g
– Saturated Fat	0.1g	0.3g
Carbohydrate – Total	22.1g	67g
<b>– Sugars</b>	1.1g	3.3g
<b>Dietary Fibre</b>	3.6g	11.0g
<b>Sodium</b>	96mg	290mg

#### Per 100g:

**Total Fat:** Look for less than 10g. Saturated Fat: Less than 2g

**Sugar:** Less than 15g, less than 25g for cereals containing dried fruit

**Dietary Fibre:** Look for more than 7.5g

**Sodium (salt):** Look for less than 120mg

Sources: Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute.





## Did you know?

When comparing packaged foods such as breakfast cereals, it's best to use the per 100g column, so that you are comparing the same quantity of each food. The serve size varies between products, so does not allow accurate comparison. Using the per 100g column also provides an idea of percentage i.e. if a cereal contains 35g sugar per 100g, it is 35% sugar!

\*Please note that these cut-offs relate specifically to breakfast cereals and may differ for other food types

## Step 2: Consider the ingredient list

The ingredients list on packaged foods shows all ingredients in descending order of amount with the main ingredient listed first and the smallest ingredient listed last. The first 3-4 ingredients listed will give you a good idea of the

main ingredients. If a source of sugar, fat or salt is listed among the first few ingredients, there may be better choices available. Try to find healthy ingredients at the beginning of the list such as whole wheat or wheat bran for high fibre choices.

For more information on the many different ingredient names for sugar, fat and salt check out [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au) or chat with your local OPAL team.

## Step 3: Nutrition claims on cereal boxes

Nutrition and health claims need to be read carefully and considered together with the ingredients list and nutrition information panel. Claims such as 'high in fibre', 'low in sugar' or 'low in salt' are usually good signs of healthier breakfast cereal choices.

Health Claim	What this means	Comments
Source of fibre	This means the cereal contains at least 2g per serve	Worth considering but there are higher fibre choices. Look for claims stating 'good source' which contain at least 4g of fibre per serve; or 'excellent source' which contain at least 7g of fibre per serve
Low in sugar	This means the cereal contains less than 5g of sugar per 100g	Worth considering
No added sugar	Means no added sugar but may contain natural sugars from ingredients such as dried fruit	May be misleading so need to check the label for sugar content
Lite or light	May refer to texture, colour or taste – not necessarily kilojoules or calories	May be misleading so need to check the label for sugar and fat content
Low fat	Must contain less than 3g fat per 100g	Worth considering but doesn't mean that it will meet all nutrient guidelines for cereals
Wholegrain	There is no definition or standard for labelling % of wholegrains	Worth considering but check the total fibre content of the product

Breakfast cereals with the Heart Foundation 'Tick' are healthier choices when compared to other cereals. Tick cereals are lower in trans and saturated fat, and sodium (salt). Tick cereals must also be a good source of fibre/wholegrain. However foods without the Tick may still be healthy choices, so always check the label.

This fact sheet provides information about choosing a healthy breakfast cereal but grainy breads, fruit, and

reduced fat dairy products<sup>#</sup> such as milk and yoghurt, are also great brekky choices.

For more information about healthy breakfasts visit [opal.sa.gov.au](http://opal.sa.gov.au)

<sup>#</sup> full fat milk for under 2 year olds, reduced-fat for 2-5 year olds, reduced-fat or skim for over 5 year olds.

