

Breakfast Cereals

A healthy cereal is a great kick-start to the day.

BUT

Try to be aware of what is in cereals your children want, as a great deal of marketing has gone into luring children into wanting “junk” food for breakfast, Free goodies, movie tie-ins, and even interactive websites are just some of the ways that companies are hooking children into a lifelong taste for sugar. By using words like ‘grain’, ‘bran’ or ‘honey’ some parents may believe that it is a healthy option, but the fact is that many are very high in sugar and salt.

Most of us wouldn’t consider giving our children a packet of crisps and a chocolate bar for breakfast, yet some of the breakfast cereals that are marketed to our children have as much or more salt than a packet of crisps and as much or more sugar in them as a chocolate bar.

Some healthy and nutritious options:

- **Wheat bix**
- **Porridge**
- **Puffed wheat**
- **Malted wholegrain flakes**

Don’t pile on the sugar: for added flavour and nutrition add fruit, yoghurt and milk. Breakfast is a great opportunity to get some really nutritious foods into your children’s diets. Children may resist change, so it’s important to keep encouraging the healthy option. If you were choosing the cereal, perhaps you would allow them to choose the fruit or flavour of yoghurt they would like. There are other great cereals in your supermarket, but it is wise to check the labels before buying.

What to look for: Check the 100g serving panel and a good cereal for children will ideally have:

- **Fibre: more than 5g but no more than 15g**
- **Fat: no more than 5g**
- **Sugar: no more than 15g (or 25g if it comes from the dried fruit)**
- **Sodium: Less than 600mg of sodium**

It is important to check the label and not buy a cereal based on its vitamins and mineral claims, a varied and balanced diet will provide all the nutrients your child needs.

Healthy Nibbles for Tots

Nutrition and physical activity Information for Under 5s

For more information visit: www.cph.co.nz

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